



# THE LOVE MATCH

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SYLVESTER SOUND"  
"VALENTINE VOX"



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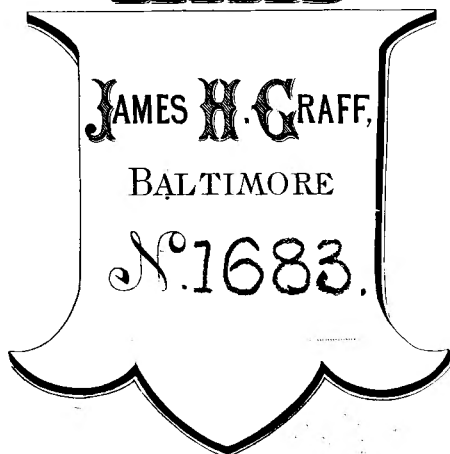
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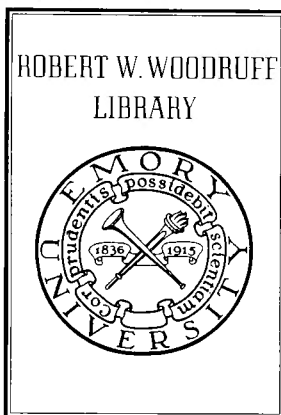
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BY HENRY COCKTON,  
AUTHOR OF "VALENTINE VOX," "SYLVESTER SOUND," &c.



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# THE LOVE MATCH.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE INTRODUCTION.

NEAR the borders of Suffolk and Cambridgeshire stands a fine commanding Hall in the centre of an extensive park, fringed with a tastefully arranged plantation studded with rare and beautiful shrubs. This Hall, at the period of which our history treats, was the property and residence of General Brooke, who, having amassed considerable wealth during twenty years' service in India, purchased the estate on his return to England with the view of passing the remainder of his life in a state of complete tranquillity.

In India he married the lovely but delicate daughter of Major Mordaunt, and nothing occurred to mar their mutual happiness until, on being assured that she could no longer live in that climate with safety, she returned to England with her only child, Georgiana, an exceedingly interesting girl, whose age at that time was fourteen.

On her arrival in England, Georgiana, who already possessed many accomplishments, was sent to school; but, as her fond mother found that she could not endure the loss of her endearing society, she, in less than a month, returned, and, during the five years which elapsed before the general left India, her education was carefully conducted at home.

Almost immediately after the general's return to England, the estate in question was purchased, and, for a time, everything went on delightfully. After the scenes of excitement in which he had lived, he viewed this place as a haven of rest. But the charms of retirement soon began to fade; the very excitement from which he had panted to escape he soon deemed essential to his happiness. To those scenes, however, there was then no returning. He therefore tried to reconcile himself to seclusion, but, in doing so, gradually became selfish. His own happiness was then the only object he had in view, but it never appeared to strike him that that could be secured only by the practice of imparting happiness to others. He seemed

to live for himself alone, and became morose, peevish, tyrannous, and wretched.

This change Mrs. Brooke—whose health was still extremely delicate—noticed with exquisite pain, while Georgiana anxiously displayed her accomplishments with the view of inspiring him with delight. She would sing to him, play to him, talk to him, read to him, but even when he consented to listen it was without the slightest manifestation of pleasure. It was, however, but seldom that her efforts were not checked. "There, that'll do; that'll do; that's quite enough of it," frequently would he exclaim. "Run away. I want to think. Go and take a ride."

Georgiana was an excellent horsewoman, and riding was her favourite exercise. She was, in fact, a dashing rider: she stood for neither gate nor hedge, and displayed in her leaps a total absence of fear. She rode for three hours at least every morning—except, indeed, when the weather was bad—accompanied by her own groom, Tom, a finely made, smart, handsome fellow, who had, by his respectful manners, skill, and attention, secured the favour of even the general himself.

He was, however, the most especial favourite of Georgiana, for whom he would willingly have risked his life, he appreciated her kindness, amiability, and condescension so highly. He was, indeed, devoted to her: he never felt so happy as when an opportunity offered for paying her any additional attention, and frequently would she create opportunities solely because she saw that it gave him pleasure to embrace them.

In a few months, however, she began to inspire other feelings than those of attachment to him as a servant: she began to feel happy in his society, and happy only when he was with her, and, as he, in her rides, was her only companion, these feelings at length struck root in her heart, and grew, and ripened into love.

She did, in reality, *love* him! Still, on becoming quite conscious of the fact, pride prompted her to check its development. She contrasted her own station with his, her own education with his, her own connexions with his; and the result of that contrast induced her to adopt, as she imagined, the means of subduing her passion.

"George, George!" she exclaimed to herself, "this must not be. The idea of forming an alliance with a man in his position *must* be repudiated, and hence it will be madness to cherish that feeling, the growth of which may cause you to be, throughout life, wretched. He is kind, attentive, devoted, affectionate, and, were he a gentleman—but he is not, and, therefore, this feeling *must* be conquered!"

She ceased to take her usual exercise. Indisposition was the plea. For a week she abstained, but her spirits sank, and she felt, in reality, ill.

"My dear George," said Mrs. Brooke, at the expiration of this week, "why are you so sad? I am aware, my love, that you must

find this place extremely dull. I wish to Heaven that your papa had not purchased it. As far as I am concerned, it is a matter of slight importance, for, afflicted as I am, I cannot be lively, I cannot be gay; but the change which the place has effected in him is amazing. Formerly, society had for him irresistible charms; he was the soul of every circle he entered: but now he appears to view all society with abhorrence, and shuns it as if it were really pestilential. I wish that he would form *some* circle around him, not for my own sake, my love, but for yours, for this life to you must be monotonous in the extreme."

"I have not, hitherto, felt it to be so," replied Georgiana. "Certainly we have not been *gay*!"

"We have not, indeed. I was speaking to your papa on this subject this morning, and eventually prevailed upon him to invite Colonel Storr and his daughter. You, of course, remember Julia, my love?"

"Oh, perfectly. And will papa invite them?"

"The invitation will be sent by this evening's post."

"Oh, I'm so delighted. She is a most charming, light-hearted little girl: so lively, *so* full of spirits, and she loves me so much, that I am sure that we shall be happy. How long will they stay?"

"They are to be invited for a month."

"A month! That will be joy, indeed. We shall have such delightful rides together. I only wish, mamma, that you were well enough to join us."

"Do not suffer that to depress you, my love: if you do, you will give me great pain. I am perfectly resigned. If I can but see *you* happy, the very highest earthly hope I have will be realised. Therefore do, my love, be cheerful. You have taken no exercise of late. Do you not think that a short, gentle ride, this lovely morning would have the effect of raising your spirits? Try it, my dear. Do let me prevail upon you to take a quiet ride round the park."

Georgiana consented. She did so on the impulse of the moment, and reflection tended to convince her that she was right. "Why should I continue to confine myself thus?" she exclaimed, in private. "Have I not sufficient resolution—sufficient strength of mind—sufficient pride to meet and to regard him as my servant?" She abandoned the thought of being incapable of doing so, and then, somewhat haughtily, ordered her horse.

Tom, on receiving this order, was delighted: not that he had even the most remote idea of the feelings he had inspired, but because he conceived that she had been restored to health, the assumed loss of which had deprived him of much pleasure. He therefore saddled the horses with alacrity, and as he led them to the door Georgiana came forth; but although he bowed with profound respect, she took not

the slightest notice of him—nor did she utter a word; she walked direct to the saddle, and when, with his usual address, he had assisted her to mount, she turned her horse's head and was off. Tom then attempted to mount, but no sooner had he placed his foot in the stirrup, than his horse, impatient to be after its companion, turned, started, and threw him.

Georgiana was for some time unconscious of this; but when she saw the horse without his rider, she on the instant stopped, and nearly fainted.

"Good Heavens!" she exclaimed; "he has been thrown!" But on turning round she saw him running towards her as fast as it was possible for him to run. She notwithstanding galloped back to meet him, and with an expression of solicitude inquired if he were hurt, and on being assured by Tom that he was not, she breathed again, and thanked Heaven!

As Georgiana stopped, Tom soon caught his horse, and when he had mounted, she slowly proceeded towards her favourite avenue, over which the trees on both sides had been trained to form an arch.

On reaching this avenue, she looked round; and Tom, conceiving that she wished to speak to him, rode up on the instant.

"You are sure," she observed, "quite sure, that you are not at all hurt?"

"Quite, Miss, quite," returned Tom, respectfully.

Be careful, Thomas; be careful, in future. I was wrong, very wrong, in starting at that pace."

"I was glad to see you do it, Miss."

"Why?"

"Because, Miss, it proved you was well again, and that made me feel quite happy."

"Do you always feel happy, then, when I am well?"

"I don't feel happy, Miss, when you are not."

"But how can the state of my health affect *you*?"

"I don't know, I'm sure, Miss, *how* it is; but I hope you'll never be ill again."

"He loves me," thought Georgiana: "that is now clear. Poor fellow! I *pity* him—but I must be firm."

The colloquy here ended. She urged her horse into a canter, and went her usual round, but not another word passed between them that day. Nor did she speak to him the next day, nor the day following that, nor indeed until Colonel Storr and Julia came down, and even then she merely said to him—

"Thomas, I wish Miss Storr, while she is here, to have *my* horse—you'll saddle papa's bay for me."

Colonel Storr, on his arrival, was perfectly astonished at the change which retirement had wrought in the appearance, habits, feelings, and disposition of the general. He had served with him in India,

where he was all life, and spirit, and fire : he was also his constant companion in London previously to his having purchased this estate, and even there he sustained his reputation for gaiety : he was therefore amazed when he found him taciturn, irritable, and unhappy.

"General, general ! My life !" he exclaimed. "Why, what a dull dog you've become !"

"This is a dull place—a dull place," replied the general.

"Then why don't you make it more lively ?"

"How ?"

"Why, by bringing a circle of friends around you."

"You mean by giving dinners to a parcel of men who talk about nothing but horses and dogs. I hate your provincial aristocracy. I hold them in utter abhorrence ! A set of muddle-headed, haughty, unintellectual fellows !—why, they have faculties only to enter with spirit into a rat-hunt !"

"Are you not somewhat too severe ?"

"They are not worth any man's severity. They are worthy only of contempt."

"I am inclined to think that you libel some of them."

"They are not worth a libel. I know them well. Their brains are swamped in fat. They haven't an idea which doesn't spring from either their passions, their stomachs, or their pockets. They are all animal—and a most disgusting species of animal they belong to. They ape the aristocracy—the real aristocracy. You should hear them—'Moi deor fellow—aw, how aw yar ? Foine weathor—deloightful weathor ! Pos'tively—aw—magnificent weathor ! Borley's—aw—getting orn splendidly—aw. The wheats, too—aw, foine ; aw—I'll take two to one they average tin coomb an acor. Foine gorr, that ! aw—magnificent animal—who—aw—is she ?' Why what do I want with such fellows as those ? And then the women :—' My gracious me : it's excessively odd ; but really, as I said to Miss Smirke this morning, is it, can it be conceivable, that a creatuor like that could by any fair means have secured him for whom so many lovely girls were dying ?' Why, colonel, do you think that I would suffer my girl to associate with wretches like these ? They are the very scum of the earth."

"I know that you were always satirical," returned the colonel, "and doubtless, there are *some* such persons to be found even here ; but I should have thought that, with Cambridge on one side and Newmarket on the other, persons might be discovered with a little more refinement."

"I have found none."

"Perhaps you have never sought them."

"Well, to tell you the truth, I never have."

"Then that brings us back to the point from which we started, that the dulness of which you complain is your own fault. A man in



your position can always bring a circle around him, and if even he be not sure that every one whom he invites, or by whom he may be invited, is a really sincere friend—a friend who would even in adversity stick to him—he is not justified in keeping aloof from society; he is not even justified in repudiating a hundred because ninety-nine out of that hundred may prove insincere. In all civilised countries society has become so essentially artificial, that scarcely any man of sense can expect to find purely disinterested friendship. They must look at friends only with reference to the pleasure they have the power of imparting. If they can give pleasure—no matter how—their society is to be courted. It is, in fact, selfish to expect that those whom you associate with would make sacrifices for you.”

“That’s right,” said the general; “that’s quite right.”

“Then why do you deprive yourself of the pleasure which society—such as it is—affords?”

“I have met none about here but fools.”

“Then you have been most unfortunate—I should say peculiarly unfortunate—but if even they be all fools, why not be a Triton among the minnows?—a very great man among the very small? You might find pleasure even in that. If a man resolves to associate with none but highly intellectual persons, his circle in the provinces will be extremely limited, and if he should make up his mind to tolerate none at his table but absolute friends, he may as well shut himself up with his wife and study the authorities of Burton. You are now in a position to care for no man upon earth! Why, then, should *you* be hypochondriacal? I have known you to derive pleasure even from the presence of a mere toady. If you cannot make friends of men, use them for your sport; do anything rather than sink into misanthropy. Try a few of the families around you: try them. If you find that you can derive *no* pleasure from their society, you need not continue to associate with them. What if they be indignant at the fact of their being cut? What need you care for their indignation? You are in a position of the most perfect independence! Therefore try them, Brooke, try them.”

“I *have* thought of inviting two or three who live near me.”

“Do so by all means. Have them here, and see what they are made of. This sort of life will never *do*!—depend upon it, Brooke, it will never do at all. But I am anxious to see this estate of yours. Shall we take a turn round the park?”

“With all my heart,” replied the general, who ordered the horses: and when they were brought, he and the colonel left the Hall.

Georgiana, who was on the lawn with Julia when they left, and who was anxious to consult her on the subject which still engrossed nearly the whole of her thoughts, shortly afterwards led her into her favourite room, and having taken a seat by her side at the window,

said, "Julia, I am about to ask a very simple question, dear, but were you ever in love?"

"In love!" echoed Julia, archly. "Yes: I'm in love with you: I'm in love with all the world: I'm especially in love with this beautiful place."

"But were you ever really in love, dear—in love, absolutely?—you know what I mean."

"What, in love with a man?"

"Yes."

"Never, dear, never! But I *think* that I see one at this moment near me who has been, and is."

"Oh! ridiculous!"

"Do you mean then to say that you are not?"

"What on earth could have induced such a thought?"

"The fact of your having put the question to me. But I never was, in your sense, in love. I should, however, like to be, dearly. It must be so nice—if, indeed, the descriptions I have read of it be correct—but why did you ask me?"

"Because I should dearly like to hear you explain your ideas on the subject."

"Well, dear, as far as I am able to judge, love must be a combination of all the most beautiful feelings of our nature—a species of celestial ecstasy—the essence of all our most charming sensations—the acme of all that is delightful. Recollect, I know nothing whatever about it, but my impression is that to be in love is to be in a state of rapture."

"Does not that depend upon circumstances, dear?"

"Well, I don't know; but I should say that, under any conceivable circumstances, it must indeed be sweet to be in love."

"Can you not conceive that it would be dreadful if, for instance, you were in love with a man whom you never could marry?"

"You allude, I presume, to a man already married. But girls, my dear, don't fall in love with married men. I don't mean to say that a case of the kind never occurred; but they don't in general do it!—they know better."

Georgiana slightly smiled as she replied, "I did not allude to a married man."

"Then to whom, my dear, did you allude?"

"I alluded to the case of a girl in love with one whose position in society is far below her own."

"Well! and do you imagine that, if this were *my* case, I should conceive it to be dreadful?"

"Would you not?"

"No! If I loved him—absolutely loved him—and he loved me

—of course I couldn't love him if he didn't—instead of regarding the fact as being dreadful, I should be in a state of ecstasy!"

"And would you marry him?"

"Of course. Should we not always marry those whom we love?"

"But suppose that he were very far below you in station?"

"Station has nothing to do, dear, with love. Who is it that says 'Love levels all distinctions'? Some one who knew all about it, I'm sure. When a rich man marries a poor girl, he raises her from her own station to his; and when a rich woman marries a poor man, she raises him from his station to hers."

"But what if he should have no education?"

"What do you mean by education?"

"Suppose that he could merely read and write?"

"I should like it all the better. I don't, of course, contemplate for a moment the possibility of his being a *fool*; but if he could but just read and write, I'd be bound to make an excellent husband of him. Don't you see that I should then have it all my own way? I hate your wise and all-accomplished men: the pride which springs from the consciousness of their intellectual superiority is perfectly disgusting. They never make *my* style of husband. But a man like him of whom you speak I could mould as I pleased, and it would be my fault if I spoiled him. Give me a man who doesn't know too much. That's the style of man, dear, for me. Should he want education, I'd educate him after my own fashion, and just to the extent I deemed correct: should he not be a gentleman, I'd make him one in my own style, and just what I imagine a gentleman should be."

"But would not that be rather difficult?"

"Difficult! No: not at all. Such a man would only require to be trained! And I'd train him."

"But seriously, dear," observed Georgiana—

"Seriously! Am I not serious?"

"You really are such a merry girl, that I know neither when you are, nor when you are not."

"Oh! but I have been serious all the time!"

"Well, but do you not think that there would be great impropriety in either you or I marrying such a man?"

"I do not. I cannot see what impropriety there *could* be—assuming, of course, that he was really beloved, and that he really loved in return."

"Julia! I'll now impart to you a secret!—a secret which I am quite sure you will not in any case reveal. I feel that I can safely confide in you, Julia!"

"You do me but justice, dear George, to believe it."

"Julia," resumed Georgiana, with an expression of intensity, "I

am in love. I am in love with one whose station is far below mine ; but one who doats upon me, and is devoted to me."

"Indeed ! Who is he ?"

"Julia, I feel almost ashamed to tell you ; but I will do so ; he is—my groom."

"Oh, do let me see him ! Where is he ? At home ?"

"Yes."

"Send for him, then ; there's a dear. I'll not hear another word until I have seen him. Do send for him, George ; there's a love."

"But how can I ? Under what pretext, dear ? What am I to say ?"

"Oh ! when he comes, say that you don't want your horse ; or, order the horse, and then alter your mind ; or—yes ; this will be better—tell him that I wish to look at the horse ! that will be excellent, George, and no story ; for I do in reality wish to see it. Shall I ring the bell, dear ?" she added, starting up and ringing it before Georgiana could answer. "Oh ! I'm so anxious to have a look at him : I know he's a dear, before he comes."

"James," said Georgiana, as the servant entered, "desire Thomas to come up."

"Is he tall ?" inquired Julia.

"Not very tall."

"Handsome ?"

"In my view, very. But you will be able to judge for yourself."

"Are his eyes dark ?—and flashing ?"

"Now do, my dear Julia, wait until you see him."

"Well ; but he is such a time ! How old is he ?"

"Why, I should say four-and-twenty."

"That's just the age I should like to have a husband."

"Hush !" cried Georgiana, as Tom knocked. "Come in !—Thomas," she added, as he entered and bowed respectfully, "Miss Storr wishes to see my horse. Will you bring him upon the lawn ?"

"With pleasure, Miss," replied Tom ; "immediately."

"You can put your own saddle on, Thomas."

"I will do so," he replied, and left the room.

"Well," said Georgiana, "are you satisfied ?"

"Satisfied, dear ! He's a love of a man. If he were but properly dressed, he'd be one of the most charming fellows I ever saw. My style of man, exactly ! He is, as you say, very handsome ; and, as to the fact of your loving him—I really could love him myself. But why do you allow him to call you *miss* ?—Certainly, *miss* !—Yes, *miss* !—No, *miss* !—and so on. Doesn't it sound, under the circumstances, odd ?"

"It certainly does ; but then he knows nothing whatever of the circumstances to which you allude. My object has been to conceal from him the feelings which he has unconsciously awakened."

"I don't see that you need be ashamed of those feelings, or of him by whom those feelings have been inspired. But do you really think that he has no idea of the fact of your being in love with him, George?"

"I do not believe that he has the slightest."

"His disposition appears to be good, dear; is it so?"

"Oh! most kind. There is nothing in the world that he would not do to serve me, while the faintest acknowledgment of his services really appears to fill his heart with gratitude."

"Why, what a dear devoted husband he would make! But here he is. Look! Upon my word he's a finely made man! Tell him to mount, dear, and ride round the lawn. Shall I ask him to do so?"

"Oh! if you please."

"Thomas!" cried Julia. "Thomas! Will you do me the favour to let me see him gallop?"

Tom touched his hat, and sprang into the saddle; and then, in fine style, took a sweep round the lawn.

"How gracefully he rides!" exclaimed Julia. "I never saw a man sit a horse with more ease."

"He has been used to it from infancy," returned Georgiana. "He therefore ought to be able to ride pretty well."

"Very true, my dear; but there are some men who have been in the habit of riding for more than half a century, and yet cannot ride with grace. Now, he is an elegant rider. See with what perfect ease he sits! That will do, Thomas!" she cried, as Tom approached. "That will do. Thank you."

Tom bowed, touched his hat, and rode off.

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "I forgot to look at the horse!"

"You will see it in the morning," observed Georgiana.

"Well! that will do. And now let us pursue our original subject. You were saying that you really loved Thomas. Well! Why do you not let him know that you love him?"

"I have not hitherto dared to do so."

"You have not *dared* to do so? Why not?"

"Before I allow him to know that, Julia, I must, of course, make up my mind to have him."

"Then why don't you make up your mind at once?"

"Oh! look at the position in which it would place me."

"What position do you *imagine* it would place you in, dear? Let us look at all the difficulties you can conceive. Now then."

"Well: in the first place, papa, I fear, could never be prevailed upon to give his consent."

"That is a difficulty, certainly. And yet, do you not think that if he knew that you loved him, and that your happiness depended upon your having him, he would yield?"



"I think not. I feel sure that he would not. I am unhappily almost certain that he would treat the idea with scorn."

"Well; but if love be that which I have always understood it to be, it is not a thing to be trifled with! It is not to be controlled! We cannot fix our affections at will, nor can we at all remove our affections when fixed! Were I to love a man—no matter whom he might be—I must either *have* him, or be for ever unhappy. The question would therefore resolve itself to this: Shall I throughout life be happy or wretched? I know how I should answer that question myself!"

"You would decide of course in favour of happiness. But could you be happy if you were to find that that decision made your friends wretched?"

"Why should your happiness make them wretched?"

"But if you found that they were—if your parents, for example, were to cast you off in consequence—could you be happy?"

"I cannot conceive the possibility of their being so hard-hearted. What! cast you off for marrying the man whom you love? repudiate you utterly, because you are happy? Such stony-hearted people might have lived in the dark ages, but I don't believe there are any of that sort in existence now. No, George, they would find your happiness contagious: they would be happy in the conviction that you were happy. They might indeed say, 'Well, there certainly does appear to be some impropriety in the step that has been taken;' but what would they say then? Why this, of course: 'It is not for us to make these young people unhappy: *we* will not mar their happiness: no—it is for us to reconcile ourselves to the match, and to hope that the happiness they now enjoy may be lasting. Happiness, dear, is the end and aim of life; and when we have it within our reach, we are wrong if we do not embrace it.'"

"I feel that I should be happy, most happy, with him!"

"I have not the slightest doubt of it. How grateful he would be! how attentive, how devoted, how anxious to please! His affection, depend upon it, would be unbounded!"

"How, then, shall I act?"

"Why, I think that in the first place you ought to reveal to him the secret: you ought to let him know that you love him."

"But how is it possible? How can I do it?"

"Shall I do it for you?"

"But what will you say?"

"Leave that to me; and then leave the rest to him."

"I tremble to think of it."

"Fiddlesticks, dear! But we'll speak of this again. Papa and the general are coming across the lawn. Shall we run down and meet them?"

Georgiana consented; but she felt ill at ease, for her mind was filled with apprehension.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE CONSULTATION.

ON the following morning, Julia—having obtained the consent of Georgiana—prepared to impart the grand secret to Tom. It was arranged that they should take a ride together; and that, on reaching her favourite avenue, Georgiana should playfully leave Julia, go round, and meet her and Tom at the top.

They accordingly mounted their horses and started; but Georgiana felt extremely tremulous—so tremulous, indeed, that Julia had the utmost difficulty in prevailing upon her to leave. She did, however, at length prevail; and Georgiana at the entrance of the avenue left them.

"Very well, Miss George!" cried Julia. "Thomas will guide me safely through. Now," she added playfully, having beckoned Tom to her side, "you must not lose me in this sweet place."

Tom touched his hat and smiled.

"Do you always accompany Georgiana?" she inquired.

"Always, Miss," replied Tom.

"You must be very fond of her?"

"Everybody must be fond of *her*, Miss."

"I wish," said Julia, smiling, "that when you address me, you would not call me 'miss.' Georgiana doesn't like to be called 'miss' by *you*. But, as I was saying, you *are* very fond of her?"

"I'd do anything in the world to serve her."

"And she would do anything in the world to serve you. You are a fortunate man, Thomas, to be loved by one so amiable, so elegant, and so kind, as Georgiana."

Tom looked at her for a moment, and marvelled what she meant.

"Do you not think," pursued Julia, "that she would make a delightful wife?"

"I'm sure she would, Miss; but I can't say I should like to see her married."

"To whom?"

"Not to any one."

"Indeed! Would you not like to marry her yourself?"

"Oh!" replied Tom, "that is out of the question."

"Indeed it is not at all out of the question."

"Such a lady would never think of any one like me."

"Not think of any one whom she loves?"

"She's kind, very kind, and condescending, and I'm very grateful for it; but I can't think she *right on* loves me."

"But I know that she does. She told me so herself. And if I were you, I should know how to act."

"I beg pardon ; but how would you act ?"

"Why, *I* should propose to her at once."

"I'm afraid, Miss, you're only making fun of me."

"Indeed I am not. No ! Upon my honour. I know that she loves you passionately ; and, therefore, if you do not act as I have suggested, you are not a wise man. But here she is. Now reflect upon what I have said."

Reflect. Yes. Tom did reflect : he reflected until he became quite bewildered. He knew neither how he rode, nor where he went : his faculties were in such a state of confusion. He followed the ladies, as a matter of course ; but he did so almost unconsciously ; and on his return he went straight to the manger, upon which he sat, and let his imagination loose. For an hour he remained in this position, and would have continued much longer doubtless, but that an idea struck and aroused him. His father ! Yes : he'd consult his father. He'd ask leave to go to Newmarket at once. And he did so ; and obtained leave, and mounted one of the horses, and rode to Newmarket, and wasn't long about it.

His father—a very decent man in his way—kept a very small public-house in that town. He had been a training groom ; and, therefore, flattered himself that he had forgotten more than any other man alive ever knew. On all matters connected with the turf, Timothy Todd was a very high authority. He knew everything. It was believed that he never said "I don't know" in his life. He was sure to know. He *would* know, and that, too, much better than any one else. He was, notwithstanding, a hearty old fellow, and *never* out of temper—when he had his own way.

"What, Tommy, my boy !" he exclaimed, as Tom entered ; "why, what brings you over here to-day ? Hallo," he added, "why, you look anxious. Anything amiss ?"

"Just bring your body this way," replied Tom ; "I want to speak privately."

"Stop ! I can't stir—you know I can't stir—till I know what's the matter. Is there anything wrong ?"

"No. Everything's right ; as right as a regiment."

"Very good, Tommy ; then come along in. Now then—but stop ; afore we perceed, have a little drop o' sussen to take. What'll you have ?"

"Oh, let's have some brandy-and-water."

"Polly, mix some brandy-and-water, and bring in some pipes, and a couple o' screws."

"Now, then," said Tom.

"Stop, Tommy : don't be too fast. Let's fust have everything right and reg'lar. Come, Polly ; come, my girl, come."

"Well, I'm coming," cried Polly.

"Well, come. Now, mind," said he, when she had brought in the

brandy-and-water, and placed the pipes and screws upon the table, "we ain't to be disturbed, Polly: recollect that. Shet the door, and don't come in for any mortal flesh. Now, in the fust place," he added, "Tommy, how's your missis?"

"Much as usual," replied Tom; "no better."

"Keep in with *her*, Tommy; keep in with *her*. Missises is the great swells arter all. A servant which keeps in with his missis—"

"Now, jist shet up shop for a minute or two, and listen a little to me."

"But I know I'm right, Tommy: I *know* I'm right."

"Well, I dessay you are; but jest hold hard a bit. You know my young missis?"

"Know *her*! Yes, and a stunnin' young lady she is. I hope nothin' ain't happened to *her*, Tommy, eh?"

"I'll tell you what's happened: she's fell dead in love, and, what's more, she's fell in love with me!"

"With *you*! Then, mark my words, Tommy, mark my words, you'll lose your sittiwation."

"Not a bit of it: no, not a ha'p'orth of it."

"Ah, but I know I'm right. I *know* I'm right. *Directly* the general finds it out, *good-bye*; you'll have to cut it."

"Well, but look here."

"I don't care where you look, I *know* you'll have to look for another sittiwation."

"I wish you'd be quiet: I *wish* you would. I came over here to consult you; but how can you give me a mite of advice if you won't hear what I've to say. Now, jest listen, will you?"

"Go on, Tommy; go on, my boy."

"Well, we have at the Hall a Colonel Storr, who came down yesterday with his daughter. Well, this daughter—who's a very nice young lady—went out this morning with Miss Georgiana for a ride—I with 'em. Well, we no sooner gets to what I calls the Shades, than Miss George takes it into her head to bolt, and leaves me and Miss Storr together."

"Well, but didn't you bolt arter *her*?"

"I meant to do, but Miss Storr stopped me, and called me to *her*, and says, says she, Thomas, ain't you fond of Miss Georgiana? Why, Miss, says I, I'd do anything to serve *her*. Don't you think, says she, she'd make a nice wife? Safe, says I, but I shouldn't much like to see *her* married. Wouldn't you, says she, like to marry *her* yourself? Oh, says I, that's quite out of the question. I don't know so much about that, says she; and then she told me plump that Miss Georgiana loved me, and went on to advise me at once to pop the question."

"Don't be too fast, Tommy; don't be too fast. Many a good

horse has been too fast at starting. Now, before we goes further, jest let's look at this. Miss Georgiana left you, you say?"

"Yes."

"Very good. Do you think, Tommy, that was a planned thing?"

"No doubt of it."

"Very good. Now let's be steady. It seems to me that she told this Miss—what's her name—Storr, to tell you all about it. She talked of marriage, you say?"

"She did."

"Very good. Has Miss Georgiana much tin of her own?"

"Lots!"

"How do you know, Tommy; how do you know?"

"Oh, her aunt left her a mint!"

"Very good. Well, then, now we'll go on a little further, Tommy. When this Miss Storr told you to pop the question, what did you say to that?"

"Why, jest at that moment Miss George came up, and when Miss Storr had told me to reflect on what she'd said to me, nothing more passed; so, when I got back, I thought I'd come over to ask your advice."

"Very good. You got leave, in course?"

"Oh, yes."

"Very good. Now, Tommy, if there's a man in the world which knows every move in these matters, it's me. You, therefore, did right to come over. Now, jest look you here; when I sum all this up, it strikes me forcible that you'll be a nob! If she'll marry you—and it looks sussen like it—in course you'll belong to the nobbery, safe. But don't be too fast, Tommy; don't be too fast. Play your cards careful, and you'll win the game. You was allus a lucky dog, even when you was a child; but if you are lucky in this, my boy, it'll make a man of you. Didn't I allus say stick to the missises? Didn't I allus tell you so? But how about the general, Tommy; the general?"

"Ah, that's the pint."

"In course *he* won't consent to nothin' of the sort. You may take your oath of that, so look out; for, if he smells a rat, why, in course, off you goes, and there'll be a end o' the matter. Now, I'll tell you what, Tommy; I'll tell you what I'd do: I wouldn't take no sort o' notice jest yet. Go on jest as usual. Keep your eyes about you, and you'll soon see, Tommy, which way the cat jumps; and when you do, that'll be the time to make play. But, whatever you do, Tommy, keep the thing dark. Don't say a word to no mortal flesh. If you do, you'll be done. But, I say, who'd ever ha' thought of your being a nob? Send I may live; when you come on the course in your curricule, what'll the knowin' ones say? And shouldn't I like to see



it! Phit, phit! *cut away, there you go, that's about the ticket!* It strikes me if anything *could* stun 'em, that would. They wouldn't have nothin' to talk about, then! But that's nayther here nor there, jest yet. It's all to come, and come it will, if you mind what you're arter. All you have to do is to keep your eyes open. Don't be too anxious. There's lots of time. If she means to have you, have you she will."

"Then you don't think I ought to say anything to her?"

"Not at present, Tommy; wait a while. *If* she means it, *she'll* give you a good opportunity; and, when she does, why, make your game. But you'll see, and act accordin'. Keep on the right side of this Miss Storr; she'll, perhaps, manage the whole matter for you. But, above all—*above* all, keep the thing dark."

"*I'll* not say a syllable to any living soul."

"Very good. And now how long are you out for?"

"Oh, I don't want to get back afore eight."

"Very good. Then we'll have tea now; there'll then be time to smoke another pipe afore you go."

Tea was accordingly ordered at once, and they then went over the matter again; and when Tom had remained until half-past seven he left, and returned to the Hall.

In the mean time Julia was earnestly engaged in impressing upon the mind of Georgiana the expediency of acting towards Tom with the most perfect candour.

"Open your heart to him, dear!" she exclaimed. "Throw off all restraint; conceal your real feelings no longer; tell him, without hesitation, that you will have him. He is so extremely diffident that I don't believe, for a moment, that he will ever approach the subject himself; and as it must, therefore, be done by you, you had better, dear, do it at once."

"But don't you think," said Georgiana, "that I ought to name the subject to mamma?"

"Can you expect that she would, for a moment, countenance the match?"

"Why should she not? She loves me dearly, and has a thousand times told me that her chief earthly hope is to see me happy. Is it, therefore, probable, that when I have explained that my happiness depends on my being united to him whom I feel I most passionately love, she, having my happiness nearest her heart, would withhold her consent to the match?"

"My dear George, I am six months your junior, but I, even I, have observed a marked difference between the ideas which we girls incline to form of happiness and those which are entertained by old married people. It has frequently struck me as being strange—very strange—that it should be so, but I have always found the difference most material; and I have not the slightest doubt that if you were

to mention it to your mamma, she would tell you that you were mistaken—that you never *could* be happy with such a man as that.”

“Oh! but I am perfectly sure that I could.”

“No doubt of it; but your mamma would say at once that she knew better. The fact is, my dear, mammas will not allow girls to know anything. ‘Look at his station, dear!’ she would exclaim, as if indeed station had anything to do with it. Why, if a *marquis* were to propose to me to-morrow, and I found I couldn’t love him, I wouldn’t have him.”

“Nor would I.”

“And yet that would be deemed ‘a good match.’ Oh, ‘an excellent match!’ How *very* good—how excellent to marry and be wretched. No, my dear, tell me of the man whom I love: that is the match for me. If happiness cannot spring from such a match, it cannot spring from anything on earth. But old people look at this matter so coldly. I suspect—I can’t, of course, presume to know, but I do suspect—that when autumn comes they forget the joys of spring.”

“Still,” said Georgiana, “I cannot believe that mamma would take so cruel a view of the matter.”

“Well, dear; certainly you know her best, but my impression is that you had better not say a single syllable to her on the subject.”

“But she must know of it some time or other. I could not, of course, think for a moment of *marrying* without her consent.”

“Then you had better think no more of Thomas.”

“Oh, that is impossible!”

“Depend upon it, dear, you will never obtain either her consent or that of the general.”

“Then shall I be compelled—if I marry him at all—to marry him clandestinely?”

“I should certainly say so. It must, of necessity, be a runaway match.”

“But, Julia, what would mamma say to that?”

“Why, she would say that you were, at least, a girl of spirit. She might be for a time angry, but when she saw you happy she would soon become reconciled. The general, too, at first might storm, but then he would soon come round again. This can, however, be considered by-and-by. Your first object is, I apprehend, to come to a right understanding with Thomas, and as this cannot be done unless you speak to him, you had better make up your mind, dear, to speak to him at once.”

“But what in the world am I to say?”

“What are you to say? I’ll tell you, dear, what *I* should say, and how I should act: I should ride into that shady lane—you cannot possibly have a better place; it appears to have been formed by nature for the purpose—and then I should have him by my side, and say calmly, ‘Thomas, you have been exceedingly attentive to me, and I

highly appreciate your attention, and as I admire your general character—believing you to be kind and good—I do not see why we should not be united.”

“Oh, but that would be very irregular. That ought to follow his proposal. He ought first to propose to *me*.”

“But you give him no encouragement to do so.”

“Why what can I do?”

“Chat to him—smile upon him—treat him not as your servant, but as your future husband, to be sure! I see that I shall have to arrange the whole affair.”

“I wish to Heaven you would do so.”

“You do? Then I will. I’ll do it in the morning. I’ll bring you together. But recollect, dear, when I have done so, you must pursue the subject.”

“I will; indeed I will. And now let us return to the drawing-room. Mamma will wonder why we are absent so long.”

To the drawing-room, therefore, they did return; and as the general and Colonel Storr immediately afterwards rejoined them, nothing more was said on the subject that night.

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## CHAPTER III.

### THE DECLARATION.

At the usual hour the following morning the horses were brought to the door by Tom, and, when Georgiana and Julia had mounted, they rode towards the avenue slowly. Colonel Storr and the general were out for a walk; but as they started in an opposite direction, the ladies had not the slightest fear of being interrupted by them.

“Don’t you think,” said Georgiana, who, as they approached the avenue, felt very nervous, “don’t you think that we had better defer it till to-morrow?”

“Why, my dear?”

“I am not exactly well this morning. I do not feel equal to the task.”

“Why, you silly, silly girl!” exclaimed Julia. “But I expected this. Come, come! go through it at once. Have it over. You’ll feel much more comfortable. Come along, do.”

Having entered the avenue, Julia turned, and told Tom to approach, which he did on the instant—and when she had looked at them both for a moment archly, she said, “Now I cannot be any longer silent. It appears that you two loving people do not understand each other perfectly. Thomas, you love Georgiana: Georgiana, you love

Thomas. Now tell each other so, and have done with it. You will both feel much better! *I* have no desire to hear your declarations! Oh! dear me, no: *I'll* ride on, and you can follow me as slowly as you please; but let me tell you this, Thomas: if you leave Georgiana's side until she has declared to you that which she feels, you do not deserve to have her!"

She then put her horse into a canter, and left them riding slowly side by side, and feeling of course much embarrassed. For some time not a word was spoken: they rode indeed three or four hundred yards in silence; but Tom at length, feeling that he ought to say something, screwed up his courage, and thus commenced:

"Is it true, Miss Georgiana," said he, tremulously—"is it true what Miss Storr has just said?"

Georgiana was silent still.

"Is it, Miss Georgiana—is it," he added—"is it really true that you love me?"

"I have always admired you, Thomas," she replied; "I always have admired you."

"And would you, Miss Georgiana—would you now—pray tell me—would you really condescend to have me? I hope no offence, Miss Georgiana," he added; "I hope I don't offend you by being so bold?"

"No, Thomas—no," replied Georgiana, faintly.

"Then if you *would* have me, what wouldn't I do to make you happy!"

"I believe that you would be kind, Thomas: yes, I believe that you would be kind."

"*Kind*, Miss Georgiana!—kind!—I'd go to the end of the world to please you. There's nothing you could think of in the world you shouldn't have! I'd attend you and serve you, and study to make you as happy as the days are long. The birds in the air, Miss, shouldn't be happier: no princess alive should have more attention paid her. Send me anywhere in the world and I'd go: tell me to do anything and I'd do it. Gratitude would make me. I'd do all in my power—I would indeed."

"Thomas," she observed, becoming somewhat more calm, "we cannot control our affections: I have long cherished feelings towards you which I have until now been most anxious to conceal, and I *have* believed, Thomas, that you entertain similar feelings towards me."

"I love you," cried Tom, "to distraction."

"There is," she continued—"there is, as you are aware, some difference between us in point of station. I am not disposed to regard that much. Society thinks much more of it than I do: indeed, I would not regard it at all, were I sure, quite sure, that you would be kind to me, Thomas—faithful, attentive, affectionate, and devoted."

"Be sure of it, Miss Georgiana. Take your oath of it. Oh! *wouldn't* I love you!"

"Now this must, of course, be kept a most profound secret. We shall have, Thomas, constant opportunities of recurring to the subject, but, for the present, at least, you must appear—"

"I understand—I understand, *dear* Miss Georgiana, and *bless* Miss Storr for bringing it about. You have made me so *happy*! You don't know *how* happy you've made me. I feel," he added, taking her trembling hand, and implanting upon it a rapturous kiss, "I don't know *how* I feel—but, bless you, Miss Georgiana—bless you."

"Hark!" she exclaimed with a start, "what was that?"

"Merely the breeze," replied Tom; "nothing more! the breeze forcing its way through the trees."

"How it startled me! It made me feel as if I had been doing something wrong. But let us now hasten to Julia."

That "breeze" was the effect of a storm!—a storm raging in the breast of the general, who, from behind the trees, saw Tom kiss Georgiana's hand, and who would have dashed through, but for Colonel Storr, who begged of him earnestly not to appear.

"For your own sake, general—for her sake, keep back!" he cried. "If you appear, she is lost for ever! Where's Julia? She is not with them? No; I thought that she could not be with them. Now, then, be calm. Let us see them out of the avenue. From what point can we do so?"

"Here!" replied the general. "Let us stand here. From this point—the scoundrel!—we can see them to the end."

They went to that point and watched them to the end, and immediately afterwards saw Julia rejoin them.

"Now," said the colonel, "be guided by me. Let us return, and consider calmly what, under these circumstances, ought to be done."

"I'll murder him!" exclaimed the general, as he yielded to Colonel Storr. "I'll have the villain's heart out! And she!—the hypocritical little devil!—I *couldn't* have believed it."

Swelling with rage, and indulging in bitter imprecations, the general returned with his friend to the Hall, and, having entered the library, closed the door, and threw himself into a chair.

"Now," said Colonel Storr, "let us approach this subject calmly, and view it as men of the world. In the first place, then, it appears to me that this has not been carried on long. From the manner in which he kissed her hand, I infer that it was the very *first* time he had done so."

"And it shall be the *last*!" exclaimed the general—"the last!"

"I hope that it will be; but how are we to be *sure* that it will be the last? That is the grand point for us to consider."

"I'll kick him to the devil!" exclaimed the general. "He shall

not be here another hour!—I'll discharge him the moment he returns."

"Would that be wise? *would* it be wise to do so?"

"Do you think that I would keep the pernicious scoundrel in my service after this?"

"Not for a continuance: certainly not. But, general, let us look at the whole bearings of the case. He, after all, is not much to be blamed."

"Not much to be blamed!"

"No! doubtless she has given him encouragement. It is quite clear that, if she had not, he never would have dared to approach her. There can be no doubt that she encouraged him, and flattered by her notice—or it may have been her actual declaration of love!—he presumed to do that which I feel quite certain he never presumed to do before. It may indeed be said that he ought not to have done it; but is there a man in his position who, having the same encouragement—the same opportunity—would not have acted as he acted? No, not one."

"*She* is the devil: I see that clearly."

"Nor can you blame her much."

"What! not blame *her*!"

"Shut out from society as she has been—"

"Shut out from society. Has she not had my society? Has she not had the society of her mother? What better society could she have?—what other society could she want?"

"The society of mothers and fathers is not in general sufficient for girls of her age. They want other society; of that you are as well aware as I am. Do you ever ride out with her?"

"I have done so: but certainly not very often."

"Then how can you wonder at what has occurred? In her rides this fellow has been her constant companion. *Can* you then wonder, under all circumstances, that she should have fixed her affections upon him?"

"I can: I do! I wonder that her *pride* did not prohibit it. The idea of a girl in her position condescending to make a companion of a vulgar, ignorant, low-bred rascal like that, is amazing! But I'll soon settle her *affection*!—I'll very soon subdue her *passion*!"

"You had better not resort to any violent means. Come, be calm."

"Calm! the devil! I cannot be calm. How is it possible for me to be calm?"

"Not possible! What, not for *you*, who in the field—"

"That's a different thing altogether. I was then performing a public duty, but when a man's *private* feelings are touched, that's a different thing altogether. *You* can be calm—yes, you can be *calm*,

because you have not my feelings. You cannot feel as I feel now, because upon you the wound has not been inflicted."

"And yet I am as anxious as you can be to check the growth of this attachment."

"Storr, I believe it—I firmly believe it. Well, tell me how *you* would proceed."

"In the first place, I should take no notice of the matter."

"You would take no *notice* of it!"

"No; neither to him nor to her—not the slightest. I would write, to-night, to her aunt at Malvern, and tell her to send a most pressing invitation. I would then take her over myself, and having explained to her aunt the whole of the circumstances, leave her there—say for a month. I would then, under pretence of bettering his condition, get this fellow a situation in some family going abroad—that could soon be managed: and when I had thus got him fairly out of the country, I'd have her back, and live in a more social style; I'd cultivate the acquaintance of the families in the vicinity; and, mark my words, Brooke, if you do this, you will find that her feelings of attachment to this fellow will very, very soon be subdued."

"There appears to be something in that," said the general; "certainly, there appears to be something in that."

"Until she left, of course, I should take especial care that he never attended her alone. In her rides, I would accompany her myself. And as for Julia, I'll write at once to her mother to send for her back, that the fact of her being here may form no excuse for the refusal of your sister's invitation."

"Well," said the general, "I really don't *see* that I can do better than follow your advice."

"Then do it at once; for be assured that if you let them know of this discovery, and either turn him off, or treat her with harshness in consequence, she'll eventually have him in spite of your teeth."

"I'm not afraid of that—I'm not at all afraid of that: I'd prevent *that*, or I'd forfeit my life; but as harshness or even direct opposition *might* tend to increase the strength of the attachment, I shall certainly adopt your suggestion."

"Very well. And now it will be necessary for you to conceal your feelings. I need not, however, say another word to you about that. You will at once see the absolute necessity for speaking, and looking, and acting as usual."

"It will be hard to do so," replied the general, "but it shall be done."

That night the letters were sent as proposed, and neither Julia, Georgiana, nor Tom, had the most remote suspicion of the secret having been discovered. They rode out the next morning as usual, but accompanied by Colonel Storr, who intimated playfully that during his stay he should certainly do himself the pleasure of accompanying them every morning.

The general's letter could not reach Malvern in less than two days; but an answer to that of the colonel arrived at the Hall by return of post. Enclosed was a note for Julia, to whom the colonel handed it carelessly at once, and then proceeded to read the letter addressed to him.

He had, however, scarcely commenced it, when Julia, with pouting lips, cried—"Why, look here, papa—just look at this note. Mamma has absolutely had the cruelty to send word that I must return to town at once."

"What, exclaimed Georgiana; leave us so soon! Surely not. Why?"

"That's what I want to know," replied Julia.

"It seems," said the colonel, "to be the wish of your mamma, and, therefore, of course, you must return."

"But what for, papa—for what reason? Why must I return?"

"Because, my dear, it is *her* wish, and therefore not another word need be said upon the subject."

"Oh, but how tiresome; isn't it, George?"

"It is *indeed* provoking," replied Georgiana. "I thought you came down to stop with us a month. But is your mamma ill?"

"No. If she were, I would go back with pleasure. Of course, papa, you return with me?"

"No, my dear, I shall remain a few days. Susan will come down to-day by the coach, and you can return to-morrow with her."

"Well, I *never* knew anything so tiresome."

"You may be sure that your mamma would not have sent for you, Julia, without sufficient reason."

"Well, papa, but why is it not stated here?"

"Julia," replied the colonel, "I am satisfied, and therefore say no more about it."

That Julia was not satisfied, of course, may be inferred; but feeling at length convinced that she would not have been sent for without *some* cause, her anxiety to ascertain what it could be soon enabled her to reconcile herself to the fact of her being thus compelled to leave her friend Georgiana.

That evening, Susan, her maid, arrived, and returned to town with her the following morning, and Georgiana, the next day, received a most affectionate and pressing invitation from her aunt.

The general, acting upon the advice of Colonel Storr, did not appear to be at all anxious for her to go: he left it entirely in the hands of his wife, to whom he had, of course, explained all; and as she proceeded to impress on her mind, that as one aunt had left her twenty thousand pounds, the other—who was equally rich—might do the same, Georgiana—chiefly actuated by the prospect of being enabled to make Tom even richer than she then had the power to make him—consented to accept the invitation, and at once prepared to leave.



Care was, of course, taken to prevent any communication between her and Tom, but, despite all their care, she managed, before she left, to let him know that she was going to Malvern for a month.

To Malvern the general accompanied her, and, during the journey, endeavoured to appear more than usually kind. They stopped one night in London, and he took her to the Opera, and would have remained the next day, but as he was anxious to return as soon as possible, with the view of disposing of Tom, they slept the next night at the residence of her aunt.

Georgiana was very highly pleased with her reception; it was, indeed, exceedingly affectionate and warm; and hence, when the general left the next morning, she scarcely regretted his absence.

That morning Colonel Storr—who had been in communication with a friend of his in town—entered the stable, ostensibly to look at the horses, and finding Tom alone, he, after having made some unimportant observations, said—“Thomas, did you ever travel?”

“Travel, sir?”

“Ay, were you ever abroad?”

“What, in foreign parts, sir? No, sir, never.”

“I thought not. Would you not like to travel?”

“Don’t know, sir; I’m sure, sir. Dessay I should *like* it.”

“It would make a man of you—enlarge your ideas—strengthen your mind—remove prejudices, and polish you up like a gentleman. Every young man of spirit should travel. You would have opportunities of witnessing all the magnificent sights, and of learning all the continental languages: you would go to their brilliant fêtes and balls, and acquire more knowledge of society in six months than you would gain in a place like this in sixty years.”

“No doubt, sir,” observed Tom, thoughtfully; “no doubt.”

“Now you,” pursued the colonel, “would make an excellent travelling servant, and I should feel great pleasure in recommending you to a family about to travel, if, indeed, you *wish* to better your condition, and to acquire a more extensive knowledge of the world.”

“Much obliged to you, sir,” replied Tom; “you’re very kind; and if I was out of place I should much like to go; but at present, sir, I’m very comfortable here, and seems to give good satisfaction.”

“Well,” returned the colonel, “I thought that I would mention it, for I like your appearance much.”

He then left the stable, and Tom, having taken his seat on the manger, began to reflect on the colonel’s phrase, “It would polish you up like a gentleman.”

Certainly he wished to be thus polished up. Georgiana was a lady, and, of course, he ought to be able to act like a gentleman. If his mind were strengthened, and his views enlarged, if he could talk of all those magnificent sights, and speak all the continental languages, he should be able to acquit himself in *any* society, and thus to

delight *her*! But would she wait until he returned? Would she! Why, of course she would. And yet he thought he had better remain where he was. He could travel after marriage with *her*! Why, to be sure he could! He could then get polished up at once! and that would do as well.

He therefore repudiated the idea of going abroad before marriage; but felt, notwithstanding, most grateful to Colonel Storr.

When the result of this brief conversation had been explained to the general, he resolved on discharging Tom at once, conceiving that, when he found himself really "out of place," the colonel would have but little difficulty in inducing him to accept his apparently kind offer. But the ground! On what ground could he discharge him? What could be his plea?

Upon this point he dwelt for some time; but, having at length decided on the course to be pursued, he sent for Tom into the library.

"Thomas!" said he, in a tranquil tone. "During the time you have been in my service, I have found you industrious and attentive. I have no reason whatever to complain of the manner in which you have discharged your duties. I do not, in fact, wish to have a better servant; but, as my daughter has gone to reside an immense distance from me, as, indeed, she may never return to the Hall, and as, therefore, your services will no longer be required, I have only to say that, if you hear of any other situation *before* your month expires, I'll do all in my power to forward your views by giving you an excellent character, and allowing you to leave me at once."

"I'm much obliged to you, sir," observed Tom; "but I shall be very sorry, sir, to leave you."

"I am sorry, too, that circumstances compel me to part with you; but circumstances cannot be controlled."

Tom said no more: he had nothing more to say. He bowed, and retired to the stable; but as it there struck him that he ought immediately to let his father know all about it, he returned to the library at once.

"If you please, sir," said he, "as it must be so, will you be so kind as to give me leave to go over to Newmarket?"

"Certainly, Thomas," replied the general. "You have my permission to do so. Take one of the horses. I shall not want you any more to-day."

Tom thanked him and withdrew; and having saddled one of the horses, was soon on the Newmarket road. That he was thoughtful—exceedingly thoughtful—is a fact which no sane individual can doubt; but he had such an infinite variety of things to think of, that his mind at length became quite chaotic.

As he slowly approached the house in which he was born, his father was smoking his pipe at the door, and no sooner saw him

coming with so much deliberation, than he exclaimed, "I'll lay my *life* there's suffen wrong."

"Why," said he, as Tom dismounted, "what's amiss?—what's amiss?"

"Come in," replied Tom. "I've got lots of news for you."

"But is there anything *amiss*?"

"I don't know. I want you to look at the circumstancials calm, and then tell me whether there is or is not."

They then went into the room behind the bar, and when a glass of brandy-and-water had been brought, they drew themselves up to the table.

"Now, in the first place," said Tom, "I've got the sack."

"You have!" exclaimed his father.

"The general gave me warning not an hour ago."

"What, then, has he found out—"

"Not a bit of it!"

"Then what have you got the sack for?"

"I'll tell you. Miss Georgiana has left the Hall; and as, she says, she may never return, they don't want me there any longer."

"What, Tommy, what! Do you mean to swindle me into the notion that Miss Georgianny has bin sent away, and that you have got warnin', for any other cause than that of the general havin' found it out?"

"I tell you he has not, then!"

"I *won't* believe it, for no mortal flesh!"

"But he told me plain he was sorry to part with me!"

"Tommy, Tommy, you ain't lived so long in the world as me. That's only a modest way of kickin' a man out. I tell you I'm right! I *know* I'm right! The thing has bin diskivered."

"Well; but how? It *couldn't* be."

"I tell you, Tommy, I know better! Will any flesh make me believe that you'd ha' both bin sent away, and that in this here hurry, if it hadn't? Have you and Miss Georgianny talked the matter over yet?"

"Yes. The very day after I came over here last, Miss Storr brought us together."

"Didn't I say she would? Wasn't I right? Well? Go on. Well?"

"Well; we rode together side by side—"

"Miss Georgianny and you?"

"Yes."

"And where was Miss Storr?"

"Oh, *she* went on. Well, we got into a confab together; and a very nice confab it was; and when a good deal had been said on both sides, she right down promised to have me."

"She did!"

"Yes! And let me kiss her hand!"

"That'll do, Tommy! That's about the ticket. Where was you?"

"In the Shades."

"No one near?"

"Not a soul!"

"How do you know? Where was the general?"

"Oh, he was gone the other way with Colonel Storr."

"You don't think that *Miss* Storr's a snake in the grass, do you?"

"She! Not a bit of it. But *she* was sent away the day but one after that."

"*She* sent away, too! The thing's gettin' clear. But go on. I'll get to the bottom of it, now."

"Well, then, three days after Miss Storr left, Miss Georgiana went off with the general, and, while he was gone, Colonel Storr—as if he knew I was going to get warning—very kindly says to me, says he, Thomas, if you'd like to go abroad—you'd make a capital travelling servant—I'll get you a place in a family that's going—"

"What! Now I see it all."

"What do you see?"

"Why, ain't it as plain as the nose on your face? The diskivery, somehow or another, has bin made, and, as they are anxious to break off the match, they've sent her off, and Miss Storr off, and now they want to transport you out of the country."

"Well," said Tom, "it certainly looks something like it."

"*Looks* suffen like it! I know I'm right, Tommy. I *know* I'm right."

"Well, but how did they find it out? *That's* the pint."

"*They* found it out somehow; p'r'aps seed you in the Shades."

An idea struck Tom on the instant.

"I have it!" he cried; "I have it! I remember that, while I was kissing her hand, she started and trembled, and cried, 'What was that?' I thought it was nothing, but *now* I think that they was a-watching us then."

"Why, Tommy, to be sure they was! They was there, I'll lay my life. That's how it was diskivered. And now, Tommy, hold hard a bit. In course you don't know where he's took her to?"

"Oh yes, I do, though. The very day afore she left, she dropped this here out of the window as I was passing."

"Did she, though. Read it, Tommy; read it."

"Here you are:—'Going to Malvern for a month.'"

"Is that all?"

"That's all. 'Going to Malvern for a month.'"

"Very good. You are sure that no one saw her drop it?"

"Quite."

"Very good. Now hold hard. *She* says she's gone for a month,

and *he* says she may never return : that's right!—no more she never may, Tommy; but don't you see the drift?"

"Oh, I see it all, now."

"Warn't I right? But Malvern, Malvern, Malvern! Where's Malvern?"

"That's what I want to know."

"Oh, we'll find that out, Tommy: if it's above ground, we'll soon find it out. But what did you say, when Colonel Storr told you he'd get you this here sittivation?"

"Why, I told him I was comfortable, at present, where I was; but, says I, if I was out of place, why, then, it 'ud be another thing."

"There you are, Tommy! Everything, you see, shows a light! *If* you was out o' place: that's the artful: well, then, we'll put him out o' place, says they. Don't you see that, Tommy, eh? don't you see?"

"See it: to be sure I do."

"Well, then, now hold hard a bit. Here, Tommy, jist go and fill this here glass, here, and then we can go on ag'in."

"Now, then," he continued, when Tom had returned; "here's a spec here—what I calls a spec. But jist let's clear up as we goes. It's quite plain, now, you must cut from the Hall, Tommy; cut it, in any case, you *must*: so that's settled. Well; now I tell you what do. Git 'em to get yiu that there sittivation—"

"What, to go abroad?"

"Hold hard: now, don't be fast. Git 'em, I tell you, to git the sittivation, and then, when you've got it, don't go."

"What'll be the good of that?"

"When you've engaged with this here family, *jist* as they're on the p'int o' startin', miss your way the very last minit, and then the general 'll think you're gone. Now, jist look here: if you don't do this, if the general knows that you're somewheres handy, he'll take all sorts o' precautions; but, if he thinks you've cut the country—and he *will*, then, because they can't write to him, if you give 'em the go-by the very last minit—if, I say, he thinks you're gone, why then he'll be off his guard. Well. Now then, Tommy, when they're gone, I'll jist tell you what you do: go down to this here Malvern, wherever it is, go down. Get a *new* suit, Tommy, and dress like a nob. You sha'n't want for mopuses, on'y mind, you marn't go *very* fast. Well, when you're there, you must hunt her up. You'll soon find her, *I* dessay. You'll ketch her at church, if you don't nowhere else, and, when you *have* found her, you'll know what to do. Now, them's the cards you've got to play. It's a spec, I know, but it may win the game, and, if it *should*, your fortens made. Now, do you understand exact?"

"Do I!" cried Tom; "do I *not*! But I *never* thought you was sich a out-an'-outer!"

"A out-an'-outer, Tommy! Why, you *didn't* think I'd lived all these years with my eyes shet? If there's a man alive as knows things, it's me. I wouldn't give in to no mortal flesh. Now, if you don't quite understand, you know, say so, and I'll go right through it ag'in."

"Oh, I understand: I see it all before me; and if she *is* to be found, I'll find her."

"Don't forget the church, Tommy. Don't forget the church. Whatever you do, don't miss the church. But where is this Malvern? I wonder whether anybody knows about here. Suppose we go out, and inquire at the shops?"

"I don't think we ought. It *may*, you know, come to the general's ears."

"*That's* right, Tommy. A very good thought. It ain't very likely, still it *might*. But I'll tell you what we *could* do; we could get a book where all the places' names is! That'll tell us at once. But I'll find it out, Tommy; I'll find it out. If it is anywhere at all, I'll find out where it is."

He then left Tom, and went to look at a Gazetteer, and, having, obtained the required information, returned, and tried to improve his plans, and, as he discussed each particular point, he kept Tom there until nearly nine.

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE ENGAGEMENT.

RESOLVED on pursuing the course prescribed, Tom embraced the very earliest opportunity of speaking to Colonel Storr; and, as the colonel was not at all anxious to keep aloof, that opportunity soon occurred.

"Beg pardon, sir," said he, "but I think, sir, you was saying you thought you could be kind enough to get me a place to go abroad?"

"Well, Thomas—well!" returned the colonel.

"Well, sir, I'd no notion then, sir, because, sir, I didn't then expect to leave here; but, since you was kind enough to say so, the general has given me warning."

"Indeed! Not in consequence of any bad conduct, I hope?"

"Oh, no: not at all, sir. *He'll* tell you that: I'm to leave, sir, because he don't want me no more; so that, as I shall soon be in wants of a place, if you would, sir, be kind enough to get this place for me, sir, I should feel very much obliged."

"But as the family to whom I alluded, Thomas, will start in a very few days, they, of course, would require you to go up at once."

"That I could do, sir. The general told me, that if I met with anything, he wouldn't think of standing in my way."

"Oh! well, then, if I find that your discharge has been occasioned by no misconduct on your part, Thomas, I'll write to them to-night, and request an immediate answer."

"Much obliged to you, sir," returned Tom. "Perhaps you'll be kind enough to speak to the general?"

"I will do so," replied the colonel; "I'll name the subject to him at once."

"Artful," said Tom, when the colonel had left him. "Oh, he's a artful card; and when we deals with them which is artful, we must be artful too. How kind, how out-an'-out kind, he thinks I thinks he is. How nice he thinks he'll do me, don't he? Polish me up like a gentleman! Yes, and learn me all the continental languages! I call it a underhand varment perceeding, that's what I call it, and nothing but, and if they don't deserve to be done, I don't know who does, that's all; and I'll do 'em! Why shouldn't I? Do I do anything wrong? Hasn't every man a right to make the best match he can? Doesn't everybody do it? Why, then, shouldn't I? Does anybody ever think of anybody else's feelings under them circumstances? Not a bit of it! Does anybody ever think of breaking off a match with a heiress because the old people objects? Not a ha'p'orth on it. Why then should I? If she is to be had, I'll have her! And where's the man, I should like to know, which wouldn't do the same?"

Arguing this, and chuckling at the prospect of "doing them which thought that *he* was to be done," Tom spent the remainder of that day alone.

Having consulted the general—who was delighted with the idea of his "warning" having had the desired effect—the colonel immediately wrote to his friend, by whom the situation had been conditionally secured; and, as the family in question had been waiting for an answer, the reply came down by return of post.

Tom was, therefore, at once summoned into the parlour, where he found Colonel Storr, with the letter in his hand, and the general apparently reading at the window.

"Thomas," said the colonel, as Tom approached the table at which he was sitting, "I have to inform you that I have been successful."

"Glad, sir, to hear it," said Tom.

"You are, however, but just in time. The family, as I said before, will leave in a few days, and, therefore, you must go up immediately."

"Very well, sir; that is, if the general has no objection."

"What's that?" demanded the general.

"The situation," replied the colonel, "I mentioned to you, I've succeeded in procuring for Thomas."

"Oh, very well. When does he want to go?"

"He ought to go as soon as possible."

"Ay, in a week or so, I suppose?"

"They'll be off in less than a week. He ought to go up to-morrow."

"To-morrow! I should have more notice than that."

"But, under the circumstances, of course you wouldn't think of depriving him thus of an excellent situation?"

"I don't wish to stand in his way—but *to-morrow*!"

"Oh, you'll be able to manage."

"Well, if you wish it, we must do the best we can."

"Artful!" thought Tom. "He wants me to be off, but he thinks I think he doesn't."

"But to-morrow," added the general, addressing Tom, "will be too soon for you, will it not?"

"Oh no, sir; I can make shift to go to-morrow."

"Well, then, I'm sure I've no desire to deprive you of an excellent situation; you are, therefore, at liberty to go."

"Thank you, sir; much obliged to you, sir. But I *should*, before I go, like to spend a few hours with my father."

"Certainly; that is but natural."

"Perhaps, sir, then you'd be kind enough to let me leave to-day?"

"Well, as I appreciate your feelings in this respect, why, I'll consent to do so. Go and prepare, and, when you are ready, I'll settle with you, Thomas, at once."

"In the mean time," said the colonel, "I'll write a letter for you to take up to town. But you must not fail to go to-morrow."

"Certainly not, sir. *I'll* not fail, sir," replied Tom, who bowed and withdrew. "They both on 'em thinks they do it nateral," he added, very privately, as he proceeded to the kitchen; "as nateral as natur' *they* thinks they do it," and the idea caused him to chuckle again. "Well," he cried, as he entered the kitchen, in which cook, and Sarah, and William were engaged, "I am off!"

"Off! When, when, when?" they exclaimed, with a start.

"In an hour!"

"Lor!"

"I've got a sittiwation to go to foreign parts."

"You don't say so?"

"It's a fact. They wants to make a traveller on me—polish me up like a gentleman—learn me all the foreign languages, and sutterer."

"Oh, *how* I should love to go, too," cried Sarah.

"Dessay," replied Tom.

"Oh, I *should* love it, dearly."

"Well, git a sittiwation and go. Perhaps I may meet you among the foreign powers. Who knows? But I must go and pack up my traps. I'll come and bid you all good-bye, presently."



"Well, but you'll have a bit of something to take before you go?" said cook.

"No," replied Tom; "I ain't got a mite of appetite."

"Nonsense. Do you make haste down, and I'll have something for you nice and hot."

"There's a love," replied Tom; "then for your sake I'll eat it."

He then left the kitchen to pack up his things; but he had no sooner left than Sarah burst into tears. She didn't at all like the thought of his leaving; nor did cook, nor did *any* of the servants, in fact; but Sarah, *she* felt it most acutely. She *loved* Tom! Tom didn't know it—she, indeed, scarcely knew it herself; but it struck her the moment he said, "Well, I'm off," that he would, allegorically, take her heart with him. It will hence be perceived that it was extremely natural for her to exclaim, "Oh, *how* I should love to go, too," it being clear that a girl loves to go with her heart, let it guide her where it may. Poor Sarah! she knew not whose heart Tom then felt he possessed; and, as she did *not* know, his very suggestion that they *might* meet "among the foreign powers," prompted her, at once, to endeavour to obtain a situation in a family going abroad.

Having corded his trunks, Tom returned to the kitchen, and ate, with gusto, the legs of a goose which cook had grilled in her choicest style. Sarah stood by, and looked, and wept. She didn't feel happy to see him gay. She fancied he might have had *some* regret, but he hadn't: he chatted, and laughed, and joked, and felt extremely merry.

"Now then," said he, having polished the bones, "it strikes me, cook, I've done you justice. Bob, which'll come for my trunks by-and-by, shall bring you a pair of gloves, old girl. He shall bring you a pair, *too*, Sally," he added. "And now I must go to the general calm."

He then returned to the parlour; and, as he entered, Colonel Storr left the table at which the general was sitting, and, with a book in his hand, walked to the other end of the room.

"Well, Thomas," said the general, "you are, I suppose, now ready to go?"

"Yes, sir," replied Tom, "I've packed up my things."

"Very well. You can have the little phaeton and take William with you.

"Thank you, sir! I thought of sending over my father's man for 'em."

"That will be unnecessary: William can go and bring the phaeton back."

"I am much obliged to you, sir: thank you."

"Here are your wages. I've included the month which I should have paid you in the event of your having remained with me."

"You're very kind, sir," said Tom: "I'm much obliged."

"And now, Thomas, as I should like much to hear of your getting

on well, you must promise me faithfully to write within a month, and let me know how you like your new situation."

"Certainly, sir," replied Tom. "Over the left!" he added: but that was added privately, and in the strictest possible confidence.

"Oh, here is the letter," said the colonel, coming forward; "you will of course deliver it yourself."

"Certainly, sir. Is this to the gentleman, sir—my new master?"

"Yes. There is his address: you will easily find it. But, Thomas, recollect you must not fail to go up to-morrow."

"Depend upon it, sir, I'll go up by the first coach."

"Very well. I wish you every success."

"Much obliged to you, sir."

"And so do I," said the general.

"I thank you, sir."

"You'll not forget to write?"

"I'll *not*, sir."

"Good-bye."

Tom bowed and left the room, and when he had kissed Sarah, Jane, Ann, and cook, he entered the phaeton with William and his trunks, and drove off.

On reaching Newmarket he stopped near the Greyhound and purchased four pair of kid gloves. He then drove to his father's, and had William in and made him drink four "stiff" glasses of grog, and then sent him home with the gloves, and his love—nominally—his love to all.

"Well, Tom!" cried his father, when William had left, "all right!—all right! Eh? Lor! I knew it. Didn't I tell you how it would be, Tommy?—didn't I tell you so?"

"You did."

"They can't get over *me*! No mortal flesh ever got over *me*!"

"I believe it," said Tom; "but now let's go to work. I'm to go up to-morrow to this here swell—this travelling swell, which is to learn me all the foreign languages."

"A dealer in foreign *whines*, Tommy! Ha, ha, ha, *ha*! Eh? What d'you think o' that? Ha, ha, ha, *ha*! Eh, Tommy? Ha, ha, ha, *ha*! Ha, ha, ha, *ha*! Let 'em beat that, Tommy. Ha, ha, ha, *ha*!"

The old gentleman was for some time quite convulsed. It was seldom indeed that he made a pun—it is not quite certain that *he* made this—but when he did or conceived that he did, it threw him invariably into convulsions.

"Now that's enough of it—come!" cried Tom. "It's a capital good 'un no doubt of the sort!—they won't *beat* it, nor won't try to beat it *dessay*—but let's go to work—come—governor!—come."

"All right, Tommy! hold hard—it's goin' off now! Foreign whines. Ha, ha, *ha*! But there—that's all right now—now then,

Tommy—let's go to business. Now then: you've got this here foreign sittivation. That's *percisely* jist what I said, Tommy, ain't it? I *knew* I was right: I'd ha' laid my life on it! Well! now then: you goes up to-morrow: very good. If you has any livery made, you know, Tommy, you marn't keep *that* back!—you'll recollect that!"

"I'll take care of that," replied Tom.

"Very good. Well, you goes; and you stops with 'em ontill they starts, and then lets 'em leave you behind 'em. Well! you'll then get a new suit made nobbish to fit you, and go down to Worcester, and then on to Malvern, and, as you'll know what to do then, very well, I don't think I need say another word more, only this, Tommy—don't be too fast."

"Leave that to me," said Tom, "leave that to me! I flatters myself I know how to manage that."

"No doubt of it, Tommy, no doubt, my boy! But a word to the wise here and there isn't lost. Whenever you want mopuses, write and you shall have 'em. It's a spec—as I said before, it's a spec—but you shan't stand still for mopuses."

Tom appreciated this, and acknowledged it appropriately, and then explained how he had left the general: after which they spent a very merry evening together, and at half-past eleven the following morning, Tom gaily started for town.

On his arrival at the inn at which the coach stopped in London, he—in consequence of a letter which Colonel Storr had despatched the previous evening—was accosted by a young man in fanciful livery, who said, "Is—ar—your name—ar—Thomas?"

"Yes," replied Tom.

"Oh, ah, how do? You're going—ar—to—ar—Sir George Granby's?"

"I am."

"Ah, yes, I'm come to meet yar. Have you—ar—had a pleasint roide?"

"Oh, very."

"Ah. How menny hours on the road?"

"About seven."

"Seving! Horrid! Seving's too long. Horrid cattle, I *suppose*! Ah, where's yar portmantoes?"

"I've a couple of trunks in the boot," replied Tom.

"A couple off tronks. Ah; portor, there's a couple off tronks in the boot, portor. Get them out immejotly. These fellows," he added, turning to Tom, "are always so horrid slow."

"Are they?" said Tom.

"Oh, horrid. Now, be careful, portor—do be careful. You'll—ar—break those tronks."

"Break 'em! How can I break 'em? I'd throw 'em over the house, and not break trunks like them!"

"Well—ar—don't be insolent."

"There's monkeys," rejoined the man, "and there's bears, and there's animals what comes between 'em."

"I'll report you, sir, to the properietors."

"*Stand* out of the way," cried the man, seizing a box, and with it nearly knocking down Tom's indignant friend. "Don't you see you're in the way here?"

"Fellowe," said Tom's friend, inspired with anger, "depend upon it—ar—you shall hear of this again."

"Oh, never mind *him*," said Tom, soothingly; "he's no gentleman, he ain't."

"I'm aware of that, Thomas, but—ar—really, if you submit—ar—to the insolence of these fellowes—ar—you'll positively be able to do nothing with them. But—ar—let me see: now, is this all your luggage?"

"That's all," replied Tom; "but I'll jest give a trifle to the coachman."

"Precisely—ar—very proper."

"Now then," said Tom, "I'm quite at your service."

"Ah, very well. But—ar—you must be thirsty?"

"Not particular," replied Tom; "but I don't much mind having a little drop of something."

"Well, then—ar—come along. You collor this, and—ar—I'll collor that, and we'll just go in heor. Sir George is from home, and my lady, of course, will not see you to-night, so we need not—ar—be in any hurry."

He therefore conducted Tom into the tap, and, when he felt that he had sufficiently proclaimed his own importance, he entered a cab with his "learned friend," and desired the man to drive "home."

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE EXPEDITION.

UNDER any other circumstances, Tom would have felt extremely happy in his new situation: for while Lady Granby was delighted with his appearance, Sir George manifestly congratulated himself on having engaged him; but as he had a far higher object in view, as his aim was to secure the hand and heart of Georgiana, he began to regard his position with contempt—still conscious of the policy of appearing to be satisfied, he wisely resolved on performing his duty.

"It ain't for long," said he to himself, in strict confidence. "In a very few days they'll be off; so the odds isn't much. Sir George is a tidy sort of fellow no doubt, but I shall soon be as much of a nob as him, and when I am, perhaps I *won't* go along! they shall see what a regular nob's made on! It shan't be my fault if I don't do the trick howdacious!"

Sustained by the prospect which opened before him, and enjoying the friendship of the important individual who did him the honour to meet him at the coach, and who undertook to teach him to talk like a gentleman, Tom spent the few days pleasantly enough, and when the morning fixed for the departure of the family arrived, he succeeded in reaching St. Katherine's wharf, by a miracle, just in time to see the steamer start.

He had been instructed to follow the carriage in a cab; and he did so; but stopped to treat the cabman on the road, and having seen the vessel safely off, desired him to drive back with all expedient speed.

"Good gracious me!" exclaimed Mrs. Leboo, who had been left in charge of the house: "why what brings you back, Thomas?"

"A pretty kettle of fish," said Tom, "arn't it. *Just* in time to be too late!"

"Lawk—oh, lawk—oh, lawk—oh, lawk; Why, what'll Sir George and my lady say? How could you, Thomas—oh, how could you?"

"Dished, I know—I'm regular dished! The sittivation's gone."

"No, I don't think that: I don't think that. But deary me, couldn't you have caught the steamer somehow?"

"If I'd been a mackerel, dessay I might; but as I wasn't I couldn't: how could I? Question is—what's to be done?"

"That *is* the question. It isn't as if you'd missed a mere coach or anything in respect of that. I don't know where they stop at! I know they're gone to Ostend, and that's all I do know."

"It won't do for me to go follering on 'em, and cutting about there among the foreign powers, when I can't speak a rag of their language."

"No: that's undeniable. The only thing that you can do now is to wait for orders. I shall have a letter from them in four or five days, and then we shall know how to act."

"Well, but where am I to wait? I can't wait here."

"Why not?"

"Oh, I could not think of keeping in the house after this!"

"Why *not*?"

"Oh, I shall get a lodging somewhere."

"Well; that you must please yourself about, only let me know where you are, that's all, that I may send to you as soon as ever a letter comes, and come one will in a few days, *I* know."

"You know the Black Lion?" said Tom.

"At the corner?"

"Yes. Dessay I shall be able to get a bed there. I may take a run into the country for a few days, but I shall leave my things there, so you'll know."

"Why not leave them here?"

"No, I may as well take 'em with me."

"Well, as you please. But I must say you don't seem to care much about it."

"What's the good of caring? What would you have me do? Would you have me fret and stew, and whine, and take on, and work myself into a perspiration? The thing's done and can't be helped. If I foller 'em, I foller 'em; if I don't, I don't. These isn't the times for getting into a dreadful sweat about a sittiwation."

"Well! I'm very glad you think so! However, I don't wish to stand in your way, and so as soon as I get a letter I'll send to the Black Lion."

"There's a darling," said Tom, taking Mrs. Leboo's hand. "What can't be helped, can't; and when it can't, you know all we have to do is to make the best of it."

"That's correctly correct," replied Mrs. Leboo, "and therefore as soon as I hear you shall know."

Tom then took his leave, and went to the Black Lion, and soon after called upon Nudgmee, the tailor, of whom he had ordered a new suit of clothes, which he found quite ready, and made in the first style.

"What's the damage?" inquired Tom, having tried on the coat, which fitted to perfection. "I shan't have to pay much for these, I dessay!"

Nudgmee made out a bill, of which the amount was twelve guineas.

"Twelve guineas!" cried Tom. "Well! in course, them which has things made in a nobbish style must expect to have to pay a nobbish price. Here's the money."

Nudgmee wrote a receipt for the amount, and when he had carefully packed up the suit—which consisted of a blue dress-coat with velvet collar, satin facings, and gilt figured buttons, a white kersey-mere waistcoat, and a pair of superbly cut French-grey trousers—Tom took the parcel under his arm, and went into the Quadrant, where he purchased a pair of patent-leather boots, a Parisian hat, a satin stock, three white cambric handkerchiefs, and two pair of primrose kid gloves.

"It strikes me," said he, having purchased these things, "that I shall now come out *rayther* howdacious! Who's to know me from a nob? Who's to beat me? The very nobs of the Nobbery can't come out more slap!"

Impatient to see himself full dressed in private, he hastened back to the Black Lion, and having entered his bed-room, proceeded to strip.

"I'll have every individual thing on before I look," said he; "*and* if the first sight ain't *stunning*, it will above a bit astonish *me*."

He drew on his trousers—an excellent fit—then pulled on his boots, which shone brilliantly—then adjusted his stock—then put on his waistcoat, and then his coat, hat, and kid gloves, and when he had opened one of his cambric handkerchiefs to hold between his finger and thumb, he approached the glass to take a survey.

"Thunder and lightning!" he exclaimed; "here's a swell! Look here! here's harness! Why no flesh'll know me! What!—why Tom!—why, you don't mean to say it's you, do you? Well, if I'd met myself in the street, I shouldn't have known myself from Adam. Send I may live though, here's a turn out! Ah! How do?—how are yar? Regular? and popolor? Well, I wish I *may* be blessed if the whole affair ain't spicy. The nobbiest nob in nature can't beat it. But I say, what'll Georgiana think when she sees me! If I could win her heart in them there things, what shall I do in these here? I *never*," he added, turning and twisting about, and taking himself in every point of view possible—"I *never*, in all my born days, see a difference so out and out!"

And the difference was indeed striking. He appeared, it is true, to be *rather* over-dressed; but his fine manly, faultless figure was certainly shown off to great advantage.

Having sufficiently admired himself, he resumed his characteristic dress, and went to book his place by the Worcester mail. He then returned to the Black Lion, and dined with the landlord, and then had a pipe and a glass of grog with him, and having enjoyed himself thus until seven, he left one of his trunks, took the other, and started.

He had luckily secured the box seat, and therefore felt perfectly at home on the road. He and the coachman were friends in five minutes, and as one knew as much about a horse as the other, the journey was pleasant to both.

On his arrival at Worcester, Tom—who felt that if he hadn't much in the house much couldn't be charged—put up at the inn at which the mail stopped; and having ascertained that a coach would start for Monmouth through Malvern in an hour, he immediately proceeded to dress. This feat he accomplished to his entire satisfaction, and then came down in appearance so changed, that the metamorphosis upset the faculties of the waiter.

"Waitor," said Tom, affectedly; "some bread and cheese and portor. Immejetly, waitor: I starts by the coach."

"The Monmouth, sir?"

"Yos! I shall be back to dinnor, dessay.—Perhaps he *don't* think

I'm a nob!" he added, as the waiter left the room in a state of consternation. "Dessay he takes me for some noble swell which don't care at all if they lays it on thick."

He then turned to the glass and surveyed himself again, and paced the room with feelings of pride; and, as every glance inspired him with additional admiration, he continued to exhibit until the waiter reappeared.

"The coach will be up, sir, in a quarter of an hour," observed the waiter.

"Very good," replied Tom. "Very good."

"I have ordered Boots to stop it when it comes, sir."

"Ah. Very good."

The waiter retired, and Tom went to work.

"I wonder," said he, "what they'll charge for this here. Bottle of stout's a shilling, in course, all the world over. Bread and cheese sixpence, dessay. Well, then, all I've got to do, is to eat sixpenn'orth on it!"

This he managed to do; and when the coach was announced, he left the inn with an air of surpassing importance.

The extreme beauty of the Malvern Hills cannot fail to strike even the most ordinary observer; but Tom was enchanted with the scenery around.

"Why, what a slap place!" he exclaimed, as he approached them. "It's a out-and-out heaven! And well it may be, for there's one angel there, if there ain't no more. Why, in such a place as this here, with her, *shouldn't* I be happy all the days of my life? Oh! if I could but see her now! What wouldn't I give to take a walk up there with her! Well! we shall see. Why," he added, catching a sudden glance of a female figure about half a mile off, "there she is!—Eh?—No!—and yet—No, that ain't her—not a bit of it—no, that ain't her. This is a out-and-out place though to catch her. Safe to see her if she comes out at all. Couldn't have a better place, nohow. Coachman! Is there no inn about heor?"

"There's one, sir, a-top o' this hill, where we change."

"Ah: very good," replied Tom, "very good."

And when they arrived at the inn, he got down.

"Waitor," said he, on being shown into a room, "just bring me some brandy-and-wator."

"Cold, sir?"

"Ah: cold. I'm not going on with the coach."

"Very well, sir."

"I wonder," thought Tom, as the waiter withdrew, "whether this swell knows anything on her. In course I man't mention her name! No, that might spile all; but I'll see if I can't get it out on him somehow. Waitor," said he, when that person returned, "you've got some foine views about heor."



"They're gene'lly considered very fine, sir."

"Ah. You've lots of young ladies about heor, I s'pose?"

"I think there's more old 'uns, sir."

"Ah!"

"It's such a place for invalids, you see, sir."

"Ah: still there's some young 'uns, in course?"

"Oh yes, sir, we've got a good many!"

"Ah: do you know a fine, tall, handsome gurl, which gene'lly goes out on horseback heor?"

"Can't say I do, sir. We seldom see ladies on horseback up here. What name, sir?"

"Oh, you wouldn't know her by name: she hasn't been long heor—a very short time."

"Can't say I know her, sir."

"Ah: they most on 'em pass heor, I s'pose, when they are out?"

"They almost all do, sir."

"Ah. Very good."

The waiter withdrew, and Tom went to the glass, and having re-adjusted his waistcoat and stock, approached the window.

"Now" said he, "I plants myself here, and if she should come by—and Heaven send she may—I can't be off seeing her, nohow."

He accordingly at once took a seat at the window, and looked right and left with an anxious eye; but having sat without a prospect of success for nearly an hour, it struck him that as she might be on the hills, he ought to be on the hills also. He, therefore, rang the bell, and when the waiter appeared, he said, "Which is the favourite hill about heor?"

"There's no particular favourite hill, sir."

"Ah: but which way do most of the people go?"

"I think I've seen most, sir, up that way."

"Ah: there: to the left. Very good. I shall come back heor by-and-by; but you may as well take for what I've had: what is it?"

"A shilling, sir, the brandy-and-water."

"A shilling: ah: and sixpence will make eighteenpence. Here it is."

"Much obliged. Shall you dine here to-day, sir?"

"Ah—why I don't know: I don't know. I may. I shall see."

He then left the inn, and taking the course indicated by the waiter, ascended the first hill he came to. From this point the prospect was far more extensive than he had imagined, and he stopped to contemplate the scene. He had never before beheld scenery so rich, so varied, so grand, or so beautiful. One thing alone could, in his judgment, make it more lovely, and that was the presence of Georgiana.

He looked round, and saw two ladies in the distance, and, with

high hopes, hastily approached them, but found that his own Georgiana was not one of *them*. He then saw a lady alone, about a mile off; but as he drew near, he distinctly perceived that she was not his own Georgiana. Several groups of ladies, at various points, now appeared; and he ran from hill to hill to examine each group; but alas! he could not see his own Georgiana. His hopes, however, prompted him still to persevere. And he did persevere: he ran up and down the hills to examine the style and features of every lady whom he saw, and thus kept up the chase, until perfectly exhausted, he returned, with his hopes half withered, to the inn.

"Well," said he, throwing himself on a chair, "I begin now to think it's no go. I've been five blessed hours upon them there hills, and no luck: not a ha'porth: no signs of no luck. Well! what's to be done now? It won't do to go back to Worcester to-night, and come here again in the morning. It must, in course, let 'em charge what they will, be cheaper to stop where I am. So that's settled. But what shall I have? Dinner? Nobs is expected to have wine with dinner: so that's knocked o' the head. I'll order tea; and then I'll have a quiet glass of grog, and sit and think about what's the best game to play to-morrow."

Tea was accordingly ordered; and to the chickens and ham which were brought with the tea, Tom did ample justice. He then informed the waiter that he should sleep there that night, and ordered a glass of brandy-and-water and a cigar; and when these had been supplied, and he had taken off his boots, which somewhat pinched him, he brought his mind to bear upon the business of the morrow.

"Now it strikes me," said he, "that it ain't a mite o' use to go trotting up and down them there blessed high hills. I'll try another dodge: I'll get up in the morning and stick at that window like wax. I'll not stir a peg for no mortal flesh. I should *say*, if she comes out at all, she'll pass here; and it's quite clear that if she *don't* come out at all, I shan't see her nowhere else: so I *think* that that's somewhere about the dodge to adopt. I on'y wish she'd told me whose house she was a-going to. But then she didn't dream of my follering on her here! Still she *might* have given me a *little* fuller direction. However, there it is, and I must make the most of it. Heaven send I may see her pass to-morrow, that's all! I don't care who's with her: I'll see where she goes, if I live. It will be hard if I have to go back after all without even setting eyes on her!—blessed hard. But I shan't do that: I feel I shan't. Oh! if she did but know I was here. Should I long be without seeing on her then? No, not a bit of it: no!"

Having delivered himself to this effect, he sank into a reverie, in which his admiration of aërial architecture proved to be profound;

but as he had no sleep the preceding night, and as he therefore soon experienced some difficulty in keeping his eyes open then, he rang the bell about nine o'clock, and wisely retired to rest.

His dreams were propitious. Georgiana appeared. He pressed her hand and kissed her cheek; and although on awaking he saw her not, he felt reinspired with hope.

He rose early, and ate a substantial breakfast; and then, in pursuance of the resolution he had formed, established himself at the window, and watched. Here he remained for three hours without moving; and here he had made up his mind to remain. He therefore rang the bell, and ordered a bottle of stout, for he felt that his spirits were sinking again.

"There arn't much life about heor," he observed, as the waiter was drawing the cork.

"No, sir, we're never very lively here," replied the waiter. "You see, sir, the most of the people about here come for the benefit of their health."

"Ah: what sort of people are they? Nobs? Rich?"

"A good many of 'em are, sir. Now, there's an old duchess," he added, as an elderly lady passed in a pony phaeton. "If I had five per cent. of what *she's* got, I could keep my carriage well."

"Ah. Rich. Very rich."

"She's worth a mint, sir."

"Dessay. Ah: who is she?"

"Her name, sir, is Brooke."

"Brooke! Brooke!" echoed Tom. "Ah:" he added, checking himself on the instant. "I think I have heard the name before. She lives about heor?"

"Just below, sir."

"Ah: A foine house, dessay?"

"No, sir, nothing particular. That's it, sir; there."

"What, that there one there, with the white front there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Ah, an old standard heor, I s'pose."

"She's been here *some* years. She's a maiden lady."

"Ah, well: there's no accounting for these things. Waitor, I dine heor to-day."

"Very well, sir. What time, sir?"

"Oh, I like, when I'm out, to dine earlyish rayther—say two."

"Two, sir: very well. What would you like to have?"

"Oh, I ain't particular: anything you happen to have in the house."

The waiter bowed, and withdrew; when Tom, slapping his thigh in a state of ecstasy, exclaimed, "*Now* all's as right as a trivet! Send I may live though, how lucky! If I hadn't called for this stout, I might have been here for a month and not seen her. She's there—to a right on dead certainty she's there—and that there old

swell's a relation. Why, what a slice of luck ! all owing to the stout ! I shall like stout as long as I live !" he added, emptying his glass, and refilling it with rapture. "Glorious ! *Now*, what's the next card to play ? Why, go down to the house now, and see if you can see her. I'll go. Here's health to the waiter of this here inn : may he *never* want nothing."

Having responded to this noble toast, by finishing his stout with the utmost cordiality, he turned to the glass, found everything "regular," put on his hat, and was off.

As he approached the house in question he felt very odd. His heart beat with surpassing violence—he didn't know why it should ; but it did, and that in spite of all his efforts to steady its action.

"Come, come," said he, to that heart of his soothingly, "what's the good o' going on so ? It ain't o' no use, you know, galloping at this rate. Come, come, be steady ; it's all right—steady !"

He reached the gate, and *thought* that he saw Georgiana, but passed, and went on a little way, and then turned ; and thought he saw her again, but again he passed. "Courage," he exclaimed, and turned once more, and absolutely stopped at the gate, and there *was* Georgiana walking pensively on the lawn.

She saw him ; but as she knew him not, she turned, and was about to withdraw from observation, when Tom exclaimed, gently, "Georgiana !" and in an instant she recognised his voice, and nearly fainted.

"Georgiana," he repeated.

"Hush," she exclaimed, looking round fearfully as she approached him. "Dear, *dear* Thomas," she added, trembling violently, "oh, how happy I am to see you here. But go, dear, go ; I expect my aunt back every moment, and I would not have her see you for worlds. Go round to the garden gate, and I'll convey to you a note, that you may know how to act. Adieu, adieu !"

They parted ; and Tom went round to the garden gate, and there remained until it was silently opened by Georgiana, who gave him a note, and looked half dead with fear.

"Away, dear !" she cried, as Tom took her trembling hand, and when he had kissed it, she hastily withdrew.

Tom, who had been utterly unable to speak, placed the note in his bosom, and held it there, until he got back to the inn. He then opened it eagerly, and read the lines which follow :—

"DEAR THOMAS,—Oh ! how delighted I am that you are here ! How highly I appreciate your devotion ! But we must be *cautious*, dear—cautious !

"Be near the garden gate at five, and you will again see

"Your own,

"GEORGIANA."

"Your own Georgiana !" exclaimed Tom, kissing the affectionate

subscription. "Bless her! I love her out-and-out now, and wouldn't *not* have her if she hadn't a penny in the world. She's an angel—a regular angel!—and if she was to tell me at five o'clock that she hadn't a copper to bless herself with I'd marry her just all the same as if she had."

The waiter now entered to lay the cloth, and Tom, who had inspired a high respect for the man, conversed with him familiarly, yet affectedly, with a view to the maintenance of that dignity which he conceived to be, under all the circumstances, proper.

"If a man," said he, during the waiter's temporary absence, "dresses like a nob, he ought to talk like a nob; and as nobs talk big, I must talk as big as them to be taken for one of the nobbery, safe. But lor though how out-and-out *pale* she looks. She ain't happy!—I know she ain't happy!—nor won't be until we're tied up! But I say though: what luck—what regular luck!—how things come about to be sure. Hadn't it been for that bottle of stout—Well, the man who invented bottled stout I hope's in heaven."

Dinner was now produced, and with it Tom had, for the very first time in his life, a pint of sherry, and would afterwards have had a cigar, but conceiving that he might have the chance of a kiss he abstained, and had in lieu of it half a pint of port, which he sipped and sipped with the utmost impatience till five-and-twenty minutes past four.

He then rose.

"But," said he, "it won't do to go yet; I'll be there to the minit, but not before. If I am, you know, the old swell may see me, and that'll be worse than murder. No: but I can go out; I can do that!—I can't stop here no longer," he added; "and so it don't signify talking."

He accordingly left the house at once, and strolled about with his watch in his hand until it was nearly five, when having the garden gate in view, he went directly towards it.

Georgiana, who then stood panting at the window, no sooner saw him approach than she descended, and on opening the gate, said, in trembling accents, "Now, dear, for Heaven's sake, do not be seen. Go round this shrubbery, and when you reach the arbour, stop till I come, dear; I will not be long."

Tom at once pursued the course she had prescribed, and when she had ascertained that no interruption was to be feared, she hastened to rejoin him.

"Oh! Thomas," she exclaimed, "I'm so happy to see you."

"And I'm full of joy to see *you*," said Tom.

"I have been so wretched. Oh! you can't think, dear, how wretched I have been. But I'm dying to know why you left the Hall."

"My own Georgiana! But how pale you look."

"I have not been well. But I feel better now—much better. But, tell me, Thomas—tell me: why did you leave the Hall?"

"Why, the general gave me warning."

"Indeed! Why?—why, Thomas?—why?"

"You little know the cause; but I'll tell you. You don't know why Miss Storr was sent home: you don't know why you was brought down here: nor do you in course know why I was discharged; but I'll tell you."

"Do so; for Heaven's sake, do so at once."

"It was because the general found out all."

"All?—what?"

"He saw us together in the Shades;—he saw me take and kiss your hand!"

"Good Heavens! Is it possible?"

"He must have done."

"Then you are not sure?"

"Sure, dear Georgiana! Sure! You'll see. Miss Storr was sent for two days after; then the general brought you here; then he gave me notice to quit, and then the colonel got me a foreign sittiuation to go abroad, and they think I'm gone. But no! I wouldn't leave England while you was here, and so I came down to see you."

Georgiana looked at him earnestly for a moment, and then exclaimed, "I see it all. But did he not," she added, "did not papa *explain* why he discharged you?"

"He said that as you had gone to reside an immense distance from him—they were his very words—and, as you might never return to the Hall, my services would be no longer required."

"As I might *never* return to the Hall?"

"That's what he said, word for word. He didn't say anything about the discovery! No: he didn't want that to be known. His plan was to get you out of the way until he had sent me to foreign parts, so that we might never see each other any more."

"Oh! I understand it all. But how did you escape?"

"I took the sittiuation, and stopped with the family until they went off by the foreign steamer. I was ordered to be on board at eight, but I didn't get there till just in time to see the vessel start: I then, as I'd made up my mind to see you, came down by the Worcester mail, and yesterday I was running about here everywhere I could think of."

"And how did you find me out at last?"

"I heard that a lady named Brooke lived here, and as I passed the house I saw you. But the general thinks I'm gone abroad!—he is by this time sure of it!"

"And *did* he say that I might never return?"

"He said that *that* was the only reason why he discharged me."

"His words may be prophetic!" exclaimed Georgiana, with an expression of intensity. "I never *may*."

"*Dear* Georgiana," said Tom, with much warmth. "You have taught me to call you my *own* Georgiana! You *may* think that I have come down here only because I believe you to be rich; but—"

"No, Thomas; no! Pray do not imagine me capable of harbouring so *base* a thought. You love me, I believe; I feel—that you love me."

"I do, Georgiana! Indeed I do! If you hadn't a shilling in the whole world I'd have you, and work and slave to make you happy."

"I believe it—indeed, indeed, I believe it. But we shall be rich as well as happy! sufficiently rich, at least, to live in a state of independence."

"But leaving that, my own Georgiana, entirely out of the question, why will you not be happy at once by marrying of me now?"

"At present, dear, that cannot be."

"Why not, Georgiana?—why not?"

"Thomas, in the first place, I am not yet of age."

"That's no odds, my love, at all! How many marry under age?"

"But, then, until I am of age!—no, dear Thomas; let us wait. In four months from this time I shall be my own mistress. I shall then receive that which was bequeathed to me by my aunt, and which will enable us to live in a style of comfort."

"But we can live in a style of comfort now. I ain't to say *poor*. My father ain't *poor*. We can *manage*, Georgiana. I'm sure we can manage. I don't see why we should wait four months. Besides, you are not happy here."

"I am not, indeed."

"Then why shouldn't you be happy? Let me persuade you to be happy? It'll take three weeks to do it, I believe; but I'll see about that, if you'll only say I may have the banns put up at once."

"The banns! Good gracious! What, have our names published in church?"

"I believe, as you're under age, it can't be done without, unless we go to Gretna Green. But what's the odds? Who'll know us? S'pose I had 'em put up at Worcester? Does anybody know you there?"

"Not a soul, that I am aware of."

"Well, I'm sure there ain't a soul there knows me. So what can it matter? Let me persuade you? My own Georgiana! Now do!"

"Thomas, I'll reflect upon what you have said. I do not think that I can ever be prevailed upon to consent to the course you have suggested; but we shall have an opportunity of reverting to the subject. We can now no longer remain here with safety. Come at

the same time to-morrow. My aunt invariably retires to her couch about five, and we can then have some further conversation."

"But shall I not see you before that time? Won't you be out in the course of the morning?"

"If I be, and you should meet me, do not, for Heaven's sake, take the slightest notice. I never by any chance go out unaccompanied by my aunt; and that which you have told me sufficiently accounts for the want of confidence she has hitherto displayed. Therefore, if you should meet me, pass on, as if you and I were the most perfect strangers."

"I will, Georgiana, I will," replied Tom.

"But where are you stopping?"

"At the inn just above?"

"Indeed! So near me! But now," she added, rising, "indeed, we must part."

"Georgiana," said Tom, with an expression of the deepest affection, "before I go, I have one great favour to ask."

"What is it?"

"It is—dear Georgiana—it is—that I may kiss that beautiful cheek! You will not be angry?"

"Ought I not to be angry?"

"I know you will not," exclaimed Tom, and kissed it.

"Is not that rude?" said Georgiana, blushing deeply.

"If it is you'll forgive me: will you not?"

"I don't know," she replied, archly; "I'll tell you to-morrow. And now, dear Thomas, leave me. Go round the way you came, and I'll meet you at the gate."

Tom did so; and met her at the gate; and kissed her there, again and again; and having exclaimed "My own Georgiana! God bless you!" departed.

She then on the instant returned to the drawing-room, and rushing to the window, stood and gazed at him as he advanced towards the inn, with the most intense feelings of admiration.

"What a love!" she exclaimed. "What a dear, dear soul! And how much like a gentleman he looks! He is indeed very elegant. And oh! *how* kind, how affectionate, how devoted! Need I be ashamed of loving *him*? Ashamed! It is my pride to love him! I do love him *dearly*, and ever shall love him. May Heaven preserve him ever!"

Her thoughts then reverted to her father's scheme, which she held to be ungenerous and cruel; and while *she* was reflecting upon the minutiae of that conduct of which, in her view, the most favourable characteristic was unkindness, Tom was smoking a cigar and congratulating himself upon having "popped the question like a nob!"



## CHAPTER VI.

## THE BANNS.

"I WONDER, my dear," said Aunt Brooke, the next morning, as Tom passed the house for about the twentieth time, "I wonder who that elegant gentleman is! I have seen him pass frequently this morning. I do not think that he is a resident here. A stranger, perhaps, come to admire the scenery; or, perhaps to look after a house. He has, certainly, a most distinguished bearing. Some nobleman, probably—and yet, I don't know of any house disengaged about here that would suit him!"

"I saw him pass before," said Georgiana, feeling compelled to say *something*.

"Oh, I have seen him pass several times! I can't think who he is."

Georgiana was silent; but these observations—albeit they caused her to feel extremely nervous—inspired her with pride. "An elegant gentleman!" Was he not elegant? "Some nobleman!" Did he not look like a nobleman? "A most distinguished bearing!" Well; was it not *distingué*? These were the questions which she asked herself and answered as she sat with her embroidery at the window, watching Tom—wishing that he would not pass *quite* so often, and yet when he had passed, panting with impatience to see him pass again.

"George, my dear," said her aunt, about twelve, "shall we go for a drive this morning?"

"I should like it much," replied Georgiana.

"Then touch the bell, dear, and we'll go. It will do you a world of good, I am sure, for you haven't been out of the house for some time."

The phaeton was ordered, and they went up to dress, and when the vehicle was brought by the boy to the gate, Tom—who had his eye still upon the house, and who was then at the window of the inn with a bottle of "heavenly stout" before him—watched it narrowly. He saw them enter the phaeton: he saw them approach; and as they passed he saw that Georgiana dared not look, lest her aunt should suspect that she knew him.

"Poor girl," said he; "there she is—bless her!—tied to that precious old maid. If she'd had her will she'd ha' nodded as she passed, but as it is, she daren't even look with her own eyes. Never mind: it ain't for long; so it don't make much odds. She's an angel, and as such'll soon fly away. If she'll only consent, this blessed arternoon, to let me put up the banns, we'll soon see about her being tied by the leg in this way. I wonder where they're gone?"

I'm a good mind to go and meet 'em as they come back—and yet, p'r'aps, I'd better not. I shall be sure to see 'em pass here again, and so, p'r'aps, I'd better stop where I am."

"What time would you please to dine to-day, sir?" inquired the waiter, who at this moment entered.

"Oh, ah! The same toime—two."

"What would you like to have, sir, pray?"

"Oh—not particular! Anything populor and spicy. I shall leave it *to yar*."

The waiter retired, and Tom resumed his post at the window, and kept it until Georgiana returned, when, as dinner was immediately afterwards announced, he sat down and ate with gusto.

This occupied an hour, which was a great relief to Tom; for having few mental resources, the time appeared to him—to use his own expression—to "crawl along like a crippled crab."

After dinner he would have asked the waiter to have a game of all-fours for a pint of stout, but the necessity which, in his view, existed for the maintenance of his dignity, prompted him to withhold the challenge.

He wanted some amusement: he really didn't know what to do. How he would have enjoyed a game of skittles or a game of quoits! But he could have neither; and therefore he kept his seat, and sipped his wine *solus*, until the time appointed by Georgiana.

That garden gate! That garden gate! Oh, how he admired that garden gate! There was nothing at all particularly chaste in its construction, and yet the gates of Somnauth would not, by him, have been held to be comparable with it. He once more reached that garden gate, and there was Georgiana, who let him in, and pressed his hand, and pointed to the shrubbery, round which he went and reached the point at which he knew that she would meet him.

She did so; and he embraced her—warmly embraced her. "Oh," said he, "I've been so dull since I left you yesterday."

"Indeed?" she exclaimed; "what has caused you to be dull?"

"I don't know, I am sure, why it is, if it isn't because I'm not with you."

"But you have been *near* me, Thomas. I have felt all day that you were *near* me."

"Yes, dear George, but that ain't the thing. I want to be always with you. I want to be always making you happy. I don't want to spend one happy hour with you, and then to spend the other three-and-twenty hours wretched. I want to be always looking at you—always saying something to you—and always hearing you saying something to me. I wish we were always together, Georgiana."

Georgiana sighed.

"Why shouldn't we be?" continued Tom. "I'm sure we should be happy. Why shouldn't we be? You said you'd think of what

I said yesterday, dear ; *have* you thought of it ? I mean about the banns."

"I have, dear Thomas ; and find it to be impracticable."

"What, not to be done ?"

"Not with any degree of safety."

"Why not, dear Georgiana—why not ?"

"I find that if persons about to be married reside in different parishes, the banns must be published in *both* parishes ; therefore, in this case, it cannot with safety be done."

"*Both* parishes ; is it so ?"

"I find it so stated in the prayer-book, which, of course, is correct."

"Of course : well—but—let me see."

"My dear, let us patiently wait."

"Well ; but, my love, is your aunt deaf at all ?"

"Deaf, dear ? no."

"Does she go to church *every* Sunday ?"

"She and *one* of the servants invariably go."

"Of a morning ?"

"No : she doesn't rise early enough to go in the morning."

"Very well, dear, that's the ticket : that settles the whole concern at once. She goes in the artemnoon. Very well. Banns ain't published, you know, in the artemnoon. They're published in the morning ; so she can't be none the wiser."

"But she may, notwithstanding, be informed of the fact."

"If the parsons about here be like the parsons I've heard, no flesh will be able to make out the names. But if people should, they don't know me, nor will they know it's you. Brooke is not a very uncommon name ; and if even they knew your name to be Brooke—and I s'pose there's not many about here that do—they wouldn't think you'd be married by banns."

"It is true that there are but few persons here who know *my* name to be Brooke, but my aunt is known by name throughout Malvern."

"Well : but they wouldn't suppose it was *her*. No : they'd think it was some servant girl, and think nothing more at all about it."

"But suppose, dear Thomas, that it *were* to be discovered."

"It won't be : depend upon it, it won't. But, dear Georgiana, if even it *was*, we should just only be as we are. But it won't ; I'm sure of it. I'll change my clothes to give notice to the clerk, and he wouldn't suppose it was you *then*, if even he knew you, which he don't. There is, my love, no danger at all : so *do* let me persuade you : pray do, Georgiana. You'll make me so happy, and you'll be happy too, dear ; I know you will."

"Thomas, dear Thomas, I feel that, with you, I *shall* be happy ; but I dread this risk."

"Why should you, dear ? Leave it to me : my dear, my own Georgiana, will you ; *will* you leave it to me ?"

"Dear Thomas, as I feel that I am entirely in your hands, although I tremble for the consequences, I will."

"Bless you, *bless* you," exclaimed Tom, passionately; "be sure, Georgiana, that all will be well."

"But mamma," said Georgiana, with emotion, "my poor dear mamma, what will *she* think?"

"She'll love you all the same," replied Tom; "I'm sure of that."

"I hope so," said Georgiana, bursting into tears, "I *hope* so."

"She's safe to do it; she can't be off."

"Were it not for *her*—"

"*Dear* Georgiana, pray don't cry. I can't be happy if you cry."

"I cannot help thinking of poor mamma. *She* never was unkind to me; never."

"I know, my dear; I know, I know. But we never should get even *her* consent. But *she'll* come round when all is over, and love you as much as ever, and more. Come then, don't cry, dear; *don't* cry. That's right; let me dry your pretty eyes. You shall not cry when we are married. I'll make you too happy then to cry. There now, I'll tell you what I'll do, dear. This is Friday; I'll go this afternoon to Worcester, and make it all right there to-night: I'll then come back the first thing in the morning and make it all right here. I shall then, you see, save just a week, and we may go to church together on Monday morning fortnight. That'll be capital, won't it?"

"I must leave, dear, the whole of the preliminaries to you. But, of course, I shall see you again to-morrow?"

"Oh yes, my love, I'll be back in the morning."

"And now, dear, we must part again. In you I repose the utmost confidence; of that, dear Thomas, be assured."

"I am; I know it: and you'll never repent it. But must I go so soon?"

"You must, my dear; indeed you must. The time appears short; I know that it does; but I dare not keep you longer."

"Well; it's best, of course, to be on the *safe* side of the hedge. But don't, my darling, be unhappy. Keep up your spirits; whatever you do, keep up your spirits, there's a love."

"I will, dear Thomas; if possible, I will. And now, good-bye. May Heaven bless you."

Tom warmly embraced her, and then worked his way through the shrubbery round to the gate. He then embraced her again with additional warmth, and blessing each other they parted.

"Waiter," said Tom, on his return to the inn, "I want to go to Wooster to-night. Ah; will there be anything going that way?"

"The coach you come by will be up in half an hour, sir."

"Ah; very good. Then bring in the bill. But first, waiter, bring a cigar."

The cigar was produced, and soon after that the bill; and as Tom

took it off the tray carelessly, he said, "Very good: but, waiter, the smallest dodge of brandy-and-water bring me."

The waiter bowed, and withdrew; and Tom looked at the bill, which was made out with great ingenuity. "What!" he exclaimed, when he saw the amount, "this is what I call paying for being a nob. A man ought to carry a mint about with him to live at an inn like this here. But how do they make it *out*?"

He examined the various items carefully, and found that they made it out very well indeed.

"Well," he continued, "it's a howdacious bill, and would keep a moderate man with a family for a month; but, of course, it must be paid—*off* course it must. If I was to expose the whole principle to 'em, they'd take nothing off. Oh dear, they couldn't afford to do that! so I'd better say nothing about it. Well, now then, how about the servants? The chambermaid, she must have something; the waiter, he *must* have something; and then there's the fellow which brings in the slippers, he must, of *course*, have something too. I don't think there's any more on 'em. Well: suppose I put down five shillings for the lot. We don't kill a pig, you know, *every* day. There: servants five shillings. Ah, waiter," he added, as that functionary re-entered, "heor, I've put down five shillings for the servants."

The waiter *looked*, and opened his mouth, and then took the bill with the money in silence.

"I wish I may die if they're satisfied now," cried Tom, as the waiter left the room; "I thought that I'd done the thing nobbish. But it won't do for me to be thought shabby here, so I'll give *him* a half-a-crown extra."

The waiter returned with a very long face, and said, "How would you like the five shillings divided?"

"Oh! as you please; I never go into particulars. But here's an extra half-crown for yourself."

The waiter's countenance brightened up, and he said, "I thank you, sir."

"Well," thought Tom, "it's all right now, I *s'pose*."

"The brandy-and-water, sir," observed the waiter, "wasn't included in the bill."

"Oh! Ah! Yes. Right. Very good. Ah! What is it?"

"A shilling, if you please, sir."

Tom paid it; and on being left alone again, said, "The sooner I'm out of this crib the better. A shilling for this here *drain*!" he added, looking at it with an aspect of contempt—"A shilling! Why, the governor gives just about twice as much for threepence. But then, what's the odds about a shilling or two, now? It's a regular imposition, I know; but I may have to stop here again, and if I *do*, as far as eating goes, they shan't get a deal out of *me*. I'll come as

hungry as a horse, and chaw every individual blessed thing up. *See* how I'll walk in, that's all."

Consoling himself with this pleasing thought, he smoked his cigar till the coach came up, when the landlord, the waiters, the napkins, and boots, bowed him out in superior style.

"Well," thought Tom, as he mounted the box, "that's worth something anyhow. There's nothing like being a nob, after all."

His first object on his arrival at Worcester was to engage private lodgings, conceiving that then he might say with truth, when he went to the clerk, that his address was number so and so, in such or such a street, in that particular parish. He accordingly, on reaching the office, inquired for his friend the mail-coachman, and having ascertained that he was then in the tap, he tied on his shawl, and buttoned up his great-coat, with the view of concealing his new suit of clothes, and went into the tap to him.

"What, my Briton!" cried the coachman, who recognised Tom in a moment: "how are you?"

"Oh, tidy!" replied Tom; "how's yourself?"

"Don' know: middlin' Are you goin' up to-night?"

"No; but I shall go in a night or two, safe."

"Well, I've booked you to go up with me, you know. Don't you go up when it's my night down."

"I'll take care of that," said Tom. "Now what'll you have? Some brandy-and-water?"

"With all my heart."

The order was given.

"Do you know," said Tom, "where I can get decent lodgings about here for a week or two?"

"What do you want with lodgin's for a week or two, when you're goin' up in a few days?"

"I'll tell you. It's a secret, but I don't mind telling you. I'm going to be married, and I want to be married here. Don't you see?"

"Oh! that's it, is it?"

"I want, you know, to say that my address is so and so, and I *shall* live there, for when I go up I shall be down again almost directly."

"All right: I see."

"But I want to be asked for the first time on Sunday."

"What, next Sunday? And this Friday night! Here, come along; I'll manage it for you; I've just got time, and as much as I have."

He then took Tom to the house of a widow whom he knew, and said, "You've a couple o' rooms to let? We'll settle the price when I come down next journey. This is a friend of mine. He'll have 'em. My time's nearly up, as you know. Good-bye."

"I've got some luggage at the office," said Tom.

"Shall I send for it, sir?" inquired the widow.

"Oh no! I'll bring it with me."

"Come along," cried the coachman; "I've no time to lose." And Tom went with him to the house of the clerk.

"How do, Mr. Tyke?" said he, as they entered. "I've got a job here. Here's a friend of mine too bashful to come by himself, so, of course, I'm obliged to come with him. He wants to be asked for the first time next Sunday. These young dogs, you see, *will* do these things in spite of all the experience of the old 'uns."

The clerk smiled, and took down the name and address of Tom, and afterwards those of Georgiana.

"You'll have to do the trick," said Tom's friend, jocosely, "and then you may expect him to stand something handsome. That's the way," he added, on leaving the house—"that's the way, my boy, to do business."

"I'm very much obliged to you," said Tom; "I am, indeed."

"Not a bit of it! It would be hard if men couldn't do these little things for each other."

They now reached the tap, and Tom ordered another glass of brandy-and-water, and when he had seen his friend safely off, he went to his lodgings and changed his dress. He was then quite at ease, and went out to smoke a pipe, and enjoyed himself in his own way till bed-time, and after having had a very pleasant night's rest, he rose, had breakfast, and walked back to Malvern.

He was then attired in his usual suit, and having ascertained where the clerk of *that* parish lived, he called upon him, mentioned the name of Mr. Tyke, and had the whole matter arranged in five minutes.

"They think," said Tom, "she's some housemaid, safe; and therefore don't trouble themselves to inquire. If they know'd what I know they'd be a little more particular; but as they don't they ar'n't at all nice. Now, then: what's the next move? I shall see Georgiana at five. Bless her—she *is* a darling, and nothing but. Well; then I go back to Worcester—stop to-morrow to hear myself asked—go up to-morrow night by the mail—be in London next morning, and down the same day to Newmarket. That I think'll be about the chalk. Now, what shall I do with myself till five? Oh, here you are," he added, as he saw a public-house; "I can go in here without being swindled *much*!"

And he went in and ordered a couple of mutton-chops; but as the people hadn't seen a couple of mutton-chops for years, he had some eggs and bacon, and enjoyed them much, and afterwards had a glass of grog with the landlord.

Here he remained until nearly five, when he went again to see Georgiana.

"I wish," said he, on the way, "I wish I had my other clothes on. But, of course, she'll know why I wear these to-day, so it don't make much odds. It ain't all dress with her: she knows better. Dress is all very well, and I must dress, of course, but she likes me as well in this dress as the other."

Punctually at five he reached the gate, and Georgiana, who saw him approach, was there.

"Dear Thomas!" she exclaimed; "I cannot remain a moment with you—my aunt has already risen from her couch."

"Dear me," said Tom; "I am sorry for that. But it's all right, my love: I've made it all right."

"Oh, I am *so* fearful my aunt will come down."

"Then I'll not keep you here another moment, my love. I'll only say that I'm going back to Worcester, then to London, and then to Newmarket, to order it so that you'll be comfortable and happy, and then to come back here as soon as I can."

"But, my dearest, how long will you be absent?"

"Oh, but a very few days."

"Will you promise me faithfully that you'll return as soon as possible?"

"I will."

"Then Heaven be with you. Hush! My aunt's coming. God bless you—God bless you! Adieu!"

The gate was closed, and he left the spot—wishing that every aunt was in heaven—and on his return to the public-house, he had a pipe, and sat and thought, and then walked back to Worcester.

In the morning he heard the banns duly published, and then went to dine with his friend, and—having most happily passed the day—started that night by the mail.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE FLIGHT.

"WELL, Tommy, my tulip!" exclaimed Mr. Todd, as Tom entered his father's bar: "in one word—before I move—is it all right?"

"Yes."

"It is. Then why didn't you drop me a line?"

"Because, if I had, the letter couldn't have reached here before to-morrow morning, and then it couldn't, nohow, have told you a quarter so much as I'm able to tell you to-night."

"Come in, Tommy. You're a chip o' the old block, which ain't to be beat by mortal flesh: *come* in, and have suffen to drink."



"Well, I'll just take a drop," said Tom; "only a drop—and then I'll go up and have a wash."

"No, no; not a bit of it—that won't do! I must fust know within a little what has been done, for I can't wait no longer, and that's all about it."

"But I shan't be long washing."

"Do you take me for Job?"

"Well, *come* and sit down then, and hear all at once."

"Just a minit—but a minit—while I fill my pipe again. Now then," he added, having accomplished that feat, "all right, Tommy; start off, but don't be too fast."

Tom, having stipulated for no interruption, then related the substance of all that had occurred, and that relation so delighted Mr. Todd, that he scratched his head and slapped his thigh, and pulled away at his pipe at the rate of two hundred and fifty puffs per minute: in short, he performed a great variety of extraordinary manœuvres, and then exclaimed triumphantly—"Wasn't I right, Tommy—wasn't I right? Wouldn't I have laid my life on it, Tommy—eh? But you did it well; it was very well done—done as well as ever I could ha' done it myself. But the banns—that's the pint. I must think o' them banns, and while I *am* thinkin', go up and have a wash."

Tom left him, and *had* a wash; and then put on his new suit of clothes—hat, stock, boots, and all—and when he returned to the bar his own father didn't know him!

"What's your pleasure, sir? What d'you please to want?" he inquired.

"Want!" cried Tom, laughing. "Why, I want to show you how I look, to be sure."

"Eh! What! Why, you don't mean that! My soul and substance, though, what a turn out! As true as I'm alive, I didn't know you! But I *say*, though—*Lor'*, here's a kick!"

"Tidy! Ain't it?"

"*Tidy*! Here, turn round, and let's have a look at the lot."

"The coat fits well behind, don't it?"

"Fits! I'll back it against all that flesh can make! Why, if you'd been *born* in it, it couldn't ha' fitted better. But—Well, this beats all I ever *did*—Turn round again, Tommy—turn round, and let's have another look in front. Well! *If* you don't look like a nob all over, I never see any soul as did."

"Rayther spicy on the whole," said Tom, "I *think*!"

"Spicy! There, don't say another word about it. There's a tile. *Lor'*, there's a howdacious tile! And there's boots! Send I may live, there's boots! Why, what sort o' leather do they call that there, Tommy?"

"Patent French polish."

'You must oil 'em well; if you don't, they're safe to crack, Tommy—safe!'

"Oil's o' no use to *them*."

"I know better. I knowed what a pair o' boots was afore you was born."

"I tell you oil won't *touch* 'em."

"It won't? *I'll* see about that in the mornin' But I can't keep my eyes off that coat. It's the nobbiest 'un I ever see. Now, what might that coat have stood you in, Tommy?"

"Seven guineas."

"Seven what! Seven guineas! Seven! Why, my best one of all only cost three-pun-ten, and that's just about *double* the size of yours!"

"Yes; but see what is."

"See what is. It's a capital coat. I've had it five-and-*twenty* year come next October Meeting, and it ain't a mite the wus for wear *now*, while that, arter wearin' it two or three year, won't be fit to be seen in the sun."

"I don't want it *should* arter two or three years."

"No; but I'm only jist looking at the thing. Here you give seven guineas for that, and I give three-pun-ten for one double the size!"

"Now how you talk. What's the size got to do with it? Nothing. It's the fit, the cut, the style, that they charges for most! Them which has nobby clothes made, must pay a nobby price."

"I know there's suffen in that. But seven guineas! Wouldn't they even so much as knock off the shillin's?"

"I didn't ask 'em. But now, let's come back to the grand point. In the first place, I want a cup o' tea."

"Here it is! It's all ready."

"And in the next, while I'm having it, I want to talk to *you*: so you'd better light your pipe agin, and make yourself happy. I must be off, you know, to-morrow, or the next day, certain; and so there ain't much time to lose. Now, first and foremost, how about the banns? You said you wanted to think about 'em."

"Yes; and I think that, under all the circumstancials, you ain't got a deal to fear."

"Very well. Now, you know all this can't be done without mouses."

"I've told you all along you shouldn't stand still for them."

"I know you have; but let's come to a regular understanding. Now you know I don't want you to *give* me any."

"Will you hold your noise, Tommy? Jist shut up shop about that?"

"But I mean I only want you to *lend* it, you know, till Georgiana comes of age."

"What do you mean by lendin' ? If I wanted a pound would you *lend* it me ? You'd *give* it me, wouldn't yer ?"

"Yes ; a thousand if I had it !"

"Very well, then ! What d'yer mean by lendin' ?"

"Why, I didn't know whether you could afford to give that which you might p'r'aps manage to lend for four months."

"That's all very well ; but 'twixt father and son, I don't like the word, Tommy. That's what I look at. I don't like the word. I never lent you nothin' in all my life yet, and I shan't begin now. What d'yer want, Tommy ? That's the pint. Let me know within a little what yer want, and if I find you *do* want it, you shall have it, Tommy, if I sell my shirt."

"Well, then, look here. She's a twenty thousand pounder, at least."

"Is that a fact ?"

"If it *wasn't*, I'd have her. If she hadn't a shilling, I'd marry her now."

"It's all very well to talk to *me* so, Tommy ; but don't talk so to the world. It's too romantical to go down the world's throat now. It won't swaller no sich stuff. If you was to marry a lady like her, an' she had *no* mopuses, where'd yer be ? She ain't fit for nothen : she can't do nothen : she couldn't bring twopence a year in, nohow ; and then when the little ones comes, where are yer ? Whatever you do, Tommy, don't let no flesh hear you talk in that there way. They won't give you credit for bein' sich a fool."

"Well, it's no use argering that point now. She's safe to be a twenty thousand pounder."

"Very well, Tommy : now you talk reason : and as sich, you mean to say it wouldn't do to bring her home to three-an'-sixpenny lodgings."

"That's jist what I do mean. We must, you know, live a little matters according to the style she's been used to."

"In course ! Don't I say so ! You must come a little near the mark. If you don't, in less than a month, all the fat'll be in the fire."

"Well, I'm glad you agree with me there."

"Why, there ain't a man in England as knows what these here things is better than me. She'd mope, an' pout, an' sigh, an' groan, an' blow up like a brick in about three weeks. I don't mean to say, you know, Tommy, that you ought to live in any *howdacious* style."

"No, no ; I don't want that, no more don't she. All I want for the next four months is to live like a quiet respectable nob."

"That's jist my sentiments. Well then. Now hold hard a bit. Have you made any calkillions ?"

"Why, I don't think according to me, taking all things into account, that I can do it—as I should like to do it—without making a hole in a hundred pounds."

"No, I don't think you can. Five pound a week, you know, 'll make a fool of eighty."

"Well, then, can you—not to say a word about lending—can you *let* me have a hundred?"

"I can! and I will."

"But can you, without putting *yourself* about?"

"Yes, Tommy—yes! and a few a-top o' that, Tommy," he added, with a wink of great significance. "I let's nobody know *exact* how many secrets goes to an ounce. You want a hunderd, and you shall have it; and if I find it *rayly* wanted, you shall have two, my boy!"

"Then you're a trump! a regular out-and-out trump!"

"Warn't I always? *No* flesh alive never found me nothing but! It's true that when you begun to think yourself a sort o' man, you used to want me to shell out fives and tens, and I wouldn't. Why wouldn't I? *Why* wouldn't I? Why, because I know'd it would go like blessed chaff before the wind, and do you no good, but a dreadful deal of harm. You'd then ha' gone along at a *rattlin'* pace, but I pulled you up in time; and you no sooner found that I wouldn't shell out—you no sooner found that you'd on'y yourself to *depend* upon—than you became as steady as a *six*-year-old; and I know I was right, I *know* it, my boy: and I know that your poor mother's spirit's in peace; for 'Jonathan,' said she, when she knew she was dying, 'take care of our dear *boy*, Jonathan, and when I'm in heaven I'll *bless* you. You won't let him come to any harm: promise me—promise me you won't: if he *should*, I shall never rest happy in my grave.' And these were the last words she spoke. I shall never forgit 'em," he added, wiping his eyes with the ample corners of his neckerchief, "never, so long as I've breath. But lor! if she was to see you now in them togs, Tommy! *Wouldn't* she be proud? There'd be no such thing as holdin' on her, Tommy. She wouldn't be able to hold her own self. I *can't* help looking at yer. As true as I'm alive, you look as much like a nob as the nobbiest of the nobbery. But I say, Tommy, let's look at them there boots close."

"I may as well pull 'em off," said Tom. "I shan't go out to-night."

"Nor to-morrow, I hope? It's true no flesh would know you if you was. Still you know, you'd be looked at; and if you *was* made out, it might p'raps go up to the Hall."

"Why, I wouldn't walk about for a fifty-pound note," said Tom. "Not a bit of it. I *think* I know a trick worth two of that. Now then," he added, having pulled off his boots, "here you are."

"What spicy tops, Tommy! Eh? Send I may live! But, I say, what's the use o' this red leather here?"

"I can't make that out *myself*. I s'pose they put it 'cause it looks nobby in the winders. But what do you think of your oil?"

"I never see sich leather as this afore; it's like glass. But, I say, now, what did these stand you in?"

"Five-and-thirty."

"They did! Why, we've got a man here, which makes out-an'-out *good* boots at seventeen-an'-six."

"Like them?"

"Not exactly like them. But I'll bet ten to one they'd last just as long."

"And longer—much longer: no doubt about that. And so'd a pair of hob-nailed shoes. But that's not the thing. The style's the great point: don't you see?"

"Yes! but five-and-thirty shillings! Hallo, Tommy! Who have we here?" he added, as a carriage drove up to the door.

"The general!" cried Tom.

"What! Hold hard, Tommy. Don't be flustered. I'll work it."

"Mr. Todd at home?" inquired William, as he came in front of the bar.

"Here am I!" cried Todd, going forward."

"Ah! Mr. Todd, how are you?"

"Ah! William! How do? How are you all at home? Pretty hearty?"

"Oh yes. The general wants to speak to you."

"Does he? In the carriage?"

"Yes; but, I say, have you heard from Tom?"

"Why, the family on'y started a day or two ago."

"Oh, indeed: oh, I wasn't aware of that."

"Just tell him I'm comin' I can't walk so fast as I use to could, you know."

"William then returned to the carriage, and Todd firmly followed.

"How do you do, Mr. Todd?" said the general, blandly. "Feeling, of course, an interest in the welfare of your son, I merely called to ascertain if you had received a letter from him."

"I've not, sir, as yet," replied Todd; "I can hardly expect to receive a letter yet."

"Well, I suppose that he has scarcely had time yet to write. But make your mind perfectly easy about him. Depend upon it he has a most excellent situation. *Good* evening."

"I wish you good night, sir."

"What did he want?" inquired Tom, as Todd returned to the bar-parlour, winking, rubbing his hands, and putting his tongue to his cheek. "What did he want?"

"Why, as he feels a very out-an'-out interest in your welfare, he on'y merely called to know if I'd received a letter from yer."

"Artful," said Tom.

"Artful, Tommy; all the world's artful: it's all art: there's no nature in it. And when I speak of the world, I mean the men which composes the world. Now-a-days men must be artful to live, and that's what makes artfulness ketching. They must be artful to go the pace. A man which isn't is crushed like a worm. Artfulness

breeds artfulness, Tommy. It's a regular science of self-defence—a study from nature—and a very long way from it, too. Honesty used to be thought the best policy, but artfulness now's thought the best practice goin'; and as practice, they say, makes perfect, you know, we shall very soon be a pack of artful cards together. It's what they calls civilisation, Tommy, that is; and as every generation improves upon it, we shall be a pretty lot by'n-by, I dessay. But I say though, about that mail-coachman. He says he knows me. Whoever he is, he's a brick; and tell him, if he ever comes down here, to call, and I'll treat him like a prince. I s'pose you'll go back to Worcester by him?"

"Why, let's see; he's down to-night, up to-morrow, and next night down again."

"That'll do, then, you know. You'll stop here to-morrow, go up the next mornin', and then you'll be ready to go on at night."

"Yes; I think that'll be about the thing."

"Well; now then, Tommy, have a pipe an' a glass o' grog, and then tell us all about what Malvern's like."

Tom had a pipe and a glass of grog, and gave a description of Malvern; and then, by going through his expedition in detail, delighted his father till bed-time.

The whole of the next day he very wisely kept within; and on the following morning started off by the coach, and at night went on to Worcester.

During his absence, Georgiana had been wretched. Her aunt had been kind to her—*very* kind—hoping, by kindness, to remove those feelings which she perceived, by her constant thoughtfulness, were in the ascendant still.

"Dear, *dear* George," she exclaimed, the day on which Tom returned, "why are you so sad, my love? You used to be full of life and gaiety. Why are you not so now? You do not know how happy you would make me, dear, if—look, George, there's that elegant man again."

Georgiana turned convulsively, saw Tom pass, and in an instant felt comparatively happy.

"I wonder who he is?" resumed her aunt; "I wish I knew. He is certainly a most gentlemanlike person, is he not?"

"Very," replied Georgiana.

"How should you like *him* for a husband, dear?"

"Much: very much."

"You would?"

"Oh, very much indeed."

"Well, I'm glad to hear you say so, because it proves that our tastes agree, for he is exactly the very style of man I should like you to marry. There's nothing low or vulgar about him, is there, dear? He is evidently a most perfect gentleman; and young, too. Who

knows? he may get an introduction to us! I wonder whom he is visiting. If he were to be introduced, dear, and fall in love with you, and propose, could you refuse him, George? could you refuse him?"

Georgiana smiled, and said, "Would you recommend me to do so?"

"Well, dear, I don't think I *should*. But of course, my love, your papa's consent in such a case would be indispensable."

"And would you, in such a case, advise him to consent?"

"I should, certainly. But he would require no persuasion of mine. He has your happiness so much at heart, that I feel quite convinced that if any perfect gentleman were to make you an offer, he'd give his consent at once. The gentleman whom we saw pass just now is one of those who command the world's respect. I'll endeavour to ascertain who he is. I should like to know much. And now, dear," she added, "what say you to a drive—will you go?"

"With pleasure, aunt," replied Georgiana.

"That's right, my dear; keep your spirits up, and look cheerful. It gives me pain to see you *pensive* and *sad*."

The phaeton was brought, and they went for a drive, and while Georgiana felt her mind much more at ease, her aunt was exceedingly chatty and agreeable.

At five precisely Tom went to the gate, and Georgiana received him with joy.

"I *knew* that you had returned!" she exclaimed. "I saw you. And oh! you are such an *immense* favourite of my aunt."

"Indeed!" cried Tom, with a look of amazement.

"Oh, she admires you beyond all expression. She absolutely told me this morning that you were the very style of man she should like me to marry."

"But, surely, she ain't found out who I am?"

"No; oh dear no! But she says that she *will* ascertain, if possible. It is your appearance she so much admires. But oh, I'm so glad to see you back. Go round, dear; go round: we have but ten minutes."

Tom went round the shrubbery as usual, and on meeting her in the arbour, said, "Of course, my love, you've heard nothing about the banns."

"No, dear; but I have been so apprehensive."

"Why should you be? There's no cause for it, love. They're safe not to find it out."

"Heaven grant that they may not."

"They're sure not—safe! And now let me tell you all about what I've done. In the first place, I've been to Newmarket, and what d'you think? I hadn't been at home two hours when the general called."

"Good Heavens! And saw you?"

"No, no; not *exactly*, Georgiana—not exactly. He called to

know if my father had received a letter from me ; so that's a plain proof that he thinks I'm abroad."

"And what did your father say?"

"He said he hadn't, of course. No more he had."

"And how did papa look?—well?"

"I didn't see him myself, but I believe so."

"But—did he say nothing more?"

"He said he felt very much interested in my welfare. But all that was artful, of course."

Georgiana sighed deeply, and became on the instant sad, which Tom saw and felt that he had acted unwisely.

"And now," he added, gaily, "I've made all the arrangements. We shall be so happy, Georgiana—*so* happy, and live in *such* comfort, dear; nothing can be like it. You shall have a horse to ride upon——"

"I don't require that, dear; indeed I don't."

"Oh! but you're to have one: and I'm to have another. My father's going to make us a present of two beauties. I so long to see you on horseback again. We shall have such beautiful rides together, and be *so* happy, Georgiana—so happy—you can't *think* how happy we shall be. I told you my father wasn't poor: nor more he is. He's a good deal richer than I thought for, and all we want we're to have."

"He's a kind, good soul," said Georgiana. "He shall soon be repaid."

"He won't hear of that; he won't hear a word of it. I half offended him when I said the same thing myself. He wants to see us happy. And shan't we be happy?—shan't we, Georgiana?"

"I hope so, dear."

"Hope!" echoed Tom, "you *know* that we shall." And throwing his arm round her neck kissed her warmly.

"Ahem! ahem!" coughed the housemaid, who, having her suspicions, crossed the garden at this interesting moment—"Ahem! ahem!"

"Heavens!" exclaimed Georgiana. "We are discovered."

"Don't be alarmed," said Tom. "What's her name?—what's her name?"

"Mary."

"Here, Polly! Polly! here!—come here."

"Did you call, sir?" asked Mary, with the most perfect coolness.

"Yes; come here, I want you. Give me your hand," he added, placing a sovereign in it, and looking at her earnestly. "I *rather* like the look of you, Polly. I think you're a girl which can keep a *secret*. If you can, and you'll keep this, I'll never forget you. You'll want a husband by-and-by yourself, and I'll see if I can't help you to a good 'un; but if you name this to any mortal flesh, I wish you may die an old maid."

"Depend upon me, sir," said Mary; "I'm dumb."



"Pray do not name it to my aunt!" cried Georgiana. "Pray—pray do not, there's a *good* girl."

"To your aunt!" cried Tom. "She mustn't name it to nobody."

"I won't, sir; upon my word, I won't; I won't open my lips, sir, to any living soul."

"Am I to believe you?" said Tom, looking steadfastly at her. "Am I to believe you?"

"You may, sir; indeed you may."

"Then I will. And now just look you here :—If I find that you don't say a word about it, Polly, I'll do all in my power to serve you; but if I find that you *do*, I'll murder myself, and order my ghost to haunt you!"

"And so you may, sir, *if* I do; but I'll not."

"Will you give me your hand upon it?"

"I will. Here it is."

"Now," said Tom, "I know you won't. I know you're an out-and-out sort. • I can't give you a kiss now; I'll owe you one. But, remember, Polly! remember!"

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Georgiana, when Mary had left them; "if she *should*—"

"My dearest love, make your mind easy on *that* score; she won't, I know she won't."

"I hope not."

"I'm sure of it; I wish I was as sure of a million of money."

"Are you fond of money, Thomas?"

"For *your* sake I should be. If I thought that it would increase *your* happiness, Georgiana, I should be very fond of it indeed."

"You are a dear, good creature—I know that you are. But indeed I begin to feel fidgety, love. We must again part."

"Polly will let us know when there's any danger."

"But I must speak to her before my aunt rises. Do you return to Worcester this evening?"

"Yes; I've taken lodgings there."

"Have you?"

"Of course, or I couldn't have said I was living at Worcester."

"I see. But to-morrow I shall see you again, Thomas?"

"Safe. Every day, I hope, now for ever."

"Then now, dear Thomas, good-bye."

"My own Georgiana!" cried Tom, "you're a darling. If I didn't love *you*, there'd be no love in me. Now, I'm going to give you something, which I want you to give me back."

"What is that, Thomas?" inquired Georgiana.

"A kiss!" replied Tom; and he gave her a kiss; and had it back, and took it away with him!

"Mary," said Georgiana, having entered the house, "I may depend upon you, Mary?"

"You may, miss; indeed, indeed you may. But what a nice gentleman, Miss Georgiana! And that's your intended! Oh, dear! what a handsome man to be sure! And so kind, too,—I never!"

"He will be kind to *you*, Mary, if your promise be kept."

"It shall be, miss; I wouldn't break it for the world! especially with such a nice gentleman as that. But I want to tell you something, miss, so that you may be upon your guard. As he passed here the other day, I think it was Friday—it was Friday or Saturday. I won't be sure which—but as he passed, missis asked if I knew who he was. I thought there was something mysterious in her manner, and I suppose from that she objects to the match, and I'm sure there ain't nothing to object to in him."

"She doesn't, Mary; nor do I wish her to know him yet."

"But don't you think she has some suspicion?"

"Not the slightest."

"Then why should she ask so particular about him?"

"Because, I presume, she is pleased with his appearance."

"As every woman—as is a woman—must be, I'm sure. But why don't he come to the house, miss?"

"The fact is, if he were, my aunt would be sure to object to it."

"But why, miss?—why? What objection could she have to a gentleman like that?"

"I am perfectly certain that she would object, Mary, and therefore I am anxious for the secret to be kept."

"It *shall* be kept by me, miss. Depend upon that."

"Then, Mary, you are a good girl, and shall not go unrewarded."

From this time till the Sunday on which the banns were, for the third time, published, Tom walked to Malvern *every* day and saw Georgiana: and when at length that long wished-for Sunday arrived, he procured a certificate from the curate, to the effect that the banns had been published there thrice, and then went for the last time to prepare her for the morrow.

"Georgiana," said he—"my own Georgiana—to-morrow, my love, we shall be all as one. No more stolen visits—no more fear and dread—no more misery—no more nothing, but happiness—out-and-out happiness, love—shall we have. It'll be a day of joy, Georgiana, to me. Will it not be so to you, Georgiana?"

"It will, dear, I hope, be the harbinger of joy. I cannot expect to be *perfectly* happy. My thoughts, under the circumstances, will of course wander, and then, dear love, anxiety will reign."

"But it shan't," cried Tom; "I won't let it: I'll let you think of nothing but happiness and joy. Anxiety, to-morrow, has a whole day's holiday. I won't let him come to school at all. And now, my love, let us just arrange about the morning. You'll be up at six; I'll be here at seven; and then, at eight, we shall be at the church. And now, about Polly: she's an out-and-out girl: I like that girl:

shall we take her with us? You'd feel more at home, you know—much more at home. What say you, Georgiana? shall she go?"

"*Will* she, dear Thomas? I should like her to go, of course; but will she?"

"Let me ask her. Just run in and tell her I want her."

Georgiana did so, and soon returned with Mary.

"Polly," said Tom, "I've proved that you are to be trusted. You've kept your word as you told me you would; and now I'm going to ask you a question. Would you like to be a bridesmaid to-morrow?"

"To-morrow, sir! Lor, sir, I've got no things fit!"

"Never mind your things. You'll do well enough. Question is—would you like to be my bridesmaid—that is, I mean, Georgiana's?—it's all the same thing. Would you like it?"

"Above all things in the world! But are you really going to be married to-morrow, sir?"

"Yes, and I should like you to go with us and live with us. Only say the word—will you go?"

"I will, sir: I'd go to the end of the world, sir, with Miss Georgiana and you."

"Very well: then that's settled. I'll be here in a post-chaise at seven. Have your traps handy, and bring as few as you can, so that we may be off in the twinkling of an eye."

"I'll be ready, sir! Oh, I'm so pleased, miss!—ain't you?"

"Now don't," said Tom, "go and make any particular bustle; if you do, the other servants 'll think you're after something."

"Oh, I'll take care, sir—I'll take care."

"Very well: then run away and mind you don't oversleep yourself in the morning. And now, Georgiana, I suppose, love, our time's nearly up."

"It is, dear. Again we must part."

"And then to meet to part no more! God bless you," he added, embracing her with rapture; "you are my own *darling*. God bless you!"

He then returned to Worcester and spent a happy evening with Jones the mail-coachman—who, in order that everything might be correct, had got a friend to drive the mail to London for him—and when he left him with the assurance that the chaise had been engaged—that the postboys were trustworthy—and that the clergyman would be at the church at eight o'clock to a second, he felt that all then was secure.

Still, on retiring to rest, he couldn't sleep; his visions of happiness were so bright, that although Somnus several times dropped his dark veil, it couldn't shut them out for a moment. There he lay with his fancy unbridled, and there he continued till four o'clock, when his anxious friend knocked at his chamber door.

"Now, my Briton!" cried Jones. "Tumble up! Past four, you know. Tumble up!"

"All right!" replied Tom, as he slipped out of bed. "What sort of a morning have we got?"

"Out-and-out."

"Good again!" cried Tom, and having drawn on his trousers, proceeded to let his friend in.

"Well," said Jones, "have you had a tidy night of it?"

"I ain't had a wink o' sleep, if that's what you mean."

"Well, no more ain't I. I've been thinking of this here affair so much, that I couldn't drop off at all. Now, I'll tell you what it is, as I've took this in hand, I should like to see everything right; and as such, I've come to this conclusion—that I'd better go with you."

"To Malvern?"

"Yes."

"By all means then go."

"You see, I shouldn't like anything to be any matters wrong, and what I'm thinking of is, that if anything *should* happen, you know, I should be on the spot, and might be useful; that is, if you haven't no objection, of course."

"Objection! I can't have no objection! I should feel much obliged if you *would* go with me."

"Very well: then that's settled. You may want some assistance, and if I wasn't there, I should only be on thorns, so we'll both go together. And now, my boy, how long shall you be a-tiddivating?"

"Oh, not long."

"Half an hour?"

"Ay, somewhere thereabouts."

"Well, I know what it is, so I'll give you three-quarters. But no more, mind you. That's just time enough for a carriage and six. In three-quarters of an hour I shall expect you at my house, and then we shall have a cup of coffee before we start."

"When we come back, you know, we must have a regular breakfast."

"Yes, yes; *I've* seen all about that: that's all arranged at the inn. But we must have something before we go, and my missis 'll have it all ready. Three-quarters of an hour, you know."

"All right!" returned Tom. "I'll be with you."

Jones then left him; and when he had completed his toilet—which he did just within the given time—he rejoined his friend, and they sat down to breakfast; but although Mrs. Jones had with great consideration provided several little delicacies, Tom could not eat; it was seldom, indeed, that his appetite failed him; but certain it is that it failed him then, and that all he could manage were two cups of coffee, with about half a quartern of brandy in each.

At six o'clock precisely he and his friend left the house; and on

reaching the inn-yard found everything ready: they therefore gave some additional instructions to the postboys, entered the carriage, and started in style.

"*Rayther* a spicy turn out," observed Tom.

"Why, it's better, you know, than a po-shay," said Jones: "and it's no use at all being scrouged in a shay when you've got a carriage like this here handy."

"No," returned Tom; "thi sis capital; this is regular out-and-out. But ain't they going something like a *little* too fast? I don't want to get there *much* before seven."

"You leave that to them. They know their time, and won't be a minute either over or under. *They'll* go steady enough on the road; but they always like to show off a little at starting."

"Well," said Tom, "and now where shall we stop? It won't do to bounce right clean up to the gate, will it? How shall we manage?"

"They're sure to be ready, you say?"

"Oh, safe!"

"Very well; then I'll tell you what we'll do: we'll stop about five hundred yards from the house, and then *you* can get out and go and see if all's right; if you find that it is, make a signal with your hat, and then leave the rest to me. Let everything be ready before the signal is made—luggage, ladies and all. I know one on 'em's a lady, you young dog, I know it. I never asked you, nor you never told me; and I like a man who can keep his own counsel till all danger's past—but I know she's a heiress; and I wish you success with all my heart and soul."

"I'll tell you all about it by-and-by," said Tom.

"All right; all right: you do just *exact* the same as I should. I shouldn't, in a case like this, feel safe, if I told a single soul. But what do you think of the plan I propose?"

"Oh, I think it'll do capital. Nothing *can* be better. When I wave my hat you'll come up?"

"On the instant—and off again the next!"

"That'll do," said Tom; "that'll do."

Having reached Malvern, the postboys were ordered to drive slowly round to a convenient spot, about five hundred yards from the gate. Here they stopped, and Tom alighted and walked towards the gate, to which Mary, who saw him approaching, rushed, and having opened it, exclaimed, "Oh, I have had such a job, and I don't really think she'll go now."

"Not go!" cried Tom: "why—why not?"

"Ever since three o'clock this blessed morning, sir, I've been a trying to keep up her spirits—"

"Where is she?"

"She's in the kitchen, now, sir; I got her down there just to have a cup of tea."

"Take me to her, Mary; at once take me to her."

Mary did so; and as he entered the kitchen, Georgiana rose, and falling upon his neck, wept and sobbed like a child.

"Georgiana!" exclaimed Tom. "My own Georgiana! Why—how is this?"

"Oh, dear Thomas," she replied; "dear Thomas, I cannot—I cannot go now!"

"Georgiana," said Tom, "Georgiana! have I then lost your confidence?"

"No, dear Thomas: indeed you have not. It is not that: it is not that."

"What is it, then, Georgiana?"

"I feel that I have not the courage to leave."

"Not the *courage*!" cried Tom, with a smile. "And do *you* think that I don't know better than that? Go and get the bonnet and shawl, Polly, go. Dressed for the occasion as you are," he added, "do you mean to make me believe that you haven't the courage to go through the ceremony, when I know you've studied and got it all by heart? Besides, dear, what'll the parson say? He'll be at the church to make us happy at eight: you wouldn't, I'm sure, like to disappoint *him*!"

"But my aunt, and my poor dear mamma!"

"Have you, my love, left that note for your aunt?"

"I have it, dear Thomas: it is here."

"Well, my love, then let us leave it for her. Oh, Georgiana," he added, "we've such a nice carriage to go to church in! I'm quite sure you'll like it. And I've a friend with me: such a good-hearted fellow; I know you'll be pleased with him. Now," he continued, as Mary returned with the bonnet and cloak, "look alive, Polly: come, look alive! I shouldn't like to keep the parson waiting. All the traps packed up, Polly?"

"They're all ready, sir," replied Mary. "Them's them, sir."

"That's right. Then while you're getting your things on, I'll just take 'em down to the gate."

Tom then seized a trunk, and while he was absent, Georgiana passively permitted Mary to put on her bonnet and cloak.

"Now then," said Tom, as he returned for the other trunk—"now put on your own things, Polly, and be quick."

"I'll not be an instant, sir," replied Mary; "not so much as an instant."

Nor was she long: when Tom again returned she was ready.

"And now, dear George," said Tom, "the note. Give it to Polly to place on the table."

Georgiana, in silence, gave Mary the note, when Tom embraced her, and drew her arm in his, and then led her, trembling with apprehension, to the gate.

His hat was waved in an instant, and up came the carriage, out of which his friend jumped, and having handed Georgiana, Tom, and Mary in hastily, put the trunks upon the box, got in himself, and they were off.

There was, it is true, no absolute necessity for this haste; but Jones acted as if they were about to be pursued, and certainly felt that if he *had* erred, the error was on the right side.

On the road Georgiana was silent; and while Tom did all in his power to cheer her, Jones and Mary, who exactly suited each other, chatted and joked most gaily.

As they entered Worcester the clock struck eight, and in less than two minutes after that they alighted at the door of the church, and found the clergyman waiting. They then proceeded to the vestry, and thence to the altar, and when the ceremony had been most impressively performed, they re-entered the carriage and went to the inn.

Here they sat down to breakfast; but the sadness of Georgiana still prevailed. She endeared herself, however, to Mrs. Jones, who received them; and at ten, fresh horses were put to the carriage, and they started for Cheltenham together.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE MYSTERY.

"OH! ma'am: oh! there's been such doings!" cried cook, as she, entered her mistress's room about half an hour after the flight from Malvern—"Oh!—"

"What's the matter?" demanded her mistress. "Good gracious!—what's the matter?"

"Oh! ma'am: there's something happened: I know there's something: I know there is—"

"What is it? Tell me instantly, I desire you."

"Ma'am, they're *gone*; they're gone for good. Neither Miss Georgiana nor Mary can be found."

"What!"

"I've searched the house from top to bottom, and all I can find is this note."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed her mistress, "what can this mean?" And having opened the note, she read as follows:

"MY DEAREST AUNT,—Let not my absence alarm you: I shall have, I hope, an early opportunity of explaining all. At present I have but to say that, in all probability, before you read this, I shall

have become the wife of him whose appearance you so much admired, and whom you said the other day you should like me to have.

"Forgive me, dear aunt, and pray still believe me to be,

"Your affectionate Niece,

"GEORGIANA."

"She has eloped!" exclaimed Aunt Rachel.

"Eloped!" cried cook. "I thought as much."

"Run instantly to the inn, and inquire if they have either let a post-chaise out this morning, or seen one pass. Run at once, and return with all possible speed."

Cook on the instant started off: and having made the necessary inquiries, returned to her mistress, who felt quite bewildered, and who eagerly exclaimed—"Well?—well, cook?—well?"

"They haven't let any chaise out this morning, but they saw a splendid carriage and four dash past like mad, ma'am, about half an hour ago."

"They did. Then she was in that. Oh! Jones!" she exclaimed, as her maid entered the room, "Georgiana has eloped."

"Is it possible?" cried Jones.

"Oh! what a world this is to live in! Who would have children? Who would have them?"

"Do you not know with whom she has eloped?"

"By sight I know him: I know him by sight. It is he whom I pointed out to you the other day."

"What, that elegant person?"

"The same."

"Well, there's one thing to be said, he's a most perfect gentleman."

"But I look at the ingratitude, Jones—the ingratitude! And then the position in which it has placed me. Hark! What's that?" she added, rushing to the window, as a post-chaise and four dashed up to the gate. "She has returned! Cook, run down on the instant; don't let her come to me! I'll not see her yet."

The bell rang with violence, and cook hastened down; but, instead of Georgiana, found the keeper of the inn, who having an eye to business, and conceiving that of course the fugitives would be at once pursued, had ordered the horses to be put to instantly, that not a single moment might be lost.

Having ascertained this, cook ran back to her mistress; who, on being informed of the fact, sent word down that in her view pursuit would be useless; and thus at once withered the innkeeper's hopes.

What was to be done? With Aunt Rachel that was the question. She could not set out for Newmarket herself. The distance was too immense!—nearly two hundred miles! And yet a letter sent by post would not be delivered until the day after the morrow; and were she even to send a messenger, it would not appear as if she were suffi-



ciently anxious. She reflected; and tried to subdue her agitation, and weighed every point, and had breakfast; and having at length resolved on undertaking the journey, she sent for the keeper of the inn.

"Mr. Chump," she observed, when that person appeared, "I appreciate your politeness. Under the afflicting circumstances, I do feel obliged by your attention. The pursuit of my niece, I am convinced, would be vain; but as I must go and communicate the intelligence to her father, I want a travelling-carriage; have you got one?"

"I haven't one of my own," replied Chump, "but I think I can borrow one for you. In fact, ma'am, I know I can."

"For four or five days or a week?"

"Oh yes."

"Very well; then you'll oblige me by doing so."

"Four horses, ma'am? or a pair?"

"I had better have four; I am anxious to get to town as early in the evening as possible: can you send one of your servants with me?—a man upon whom you can depend?"

"Certainly, ma'am: I will do so."

"Then let me have the carriage as soon as possible."

Chump bowed and withdrew; and Aunt Rachel hastily prepared for her journey; and when all the preliminaries had been arranged, she entered the carriage with Jones.

As they had four horses the whole of the way, they reached town about nine o'clock, and put up at an hotel, where Aunt Rachel, who felt much fatigued, had a warm bath and retired to rest early.

Resolved on getting down to Newmarket as soon as possible, she had ordered the carriage to be in readiness at eight, and being then prepared to start, she pursued her journey, and in less than six hours arrived at the Hall.

The general was about to mount his horse when he saw the carriage dash past the lodge, and feeling on the instant that *something* had occurred, he anxiously watched its approach.

"Rachel!" he exclaimed, as the carriage drew up; "why, how is this, Rachel? Where's George?"

"Oh, my dear brother—"

"Where's George?" he again demanded, impetuously. "What has happened?—where is she?"

"Alas, my dear brother, she's gone!"

"Where?—with whom?"

"Let me alight, and I'll tell you all."

"Gone, gone! Do you mean that she is dead?"

"No, no: not dead—not dead. But give me your arm; I am nearly exhausted. There—gently," she added, as he pulled her in impatiently, "I never shall get over this."

"Now," he exclaimed, having led her to a chair. "Keep me no longer in suspense. What has happened?"

"In the first place, read this," she replied, giving him Georgiana's note. "It was left for me yesterday morning."

The general eagerly seized the note, and having read it, exclaimed—"Well: who is he?"

"I know not who he is, but—"

"What! Does she not say here, 'I shall have become the wife of him whose appearance you so much admired, and whom you said the other day you should like me to have'?"

"That is true: still he is to me a most perfect stranger."

"Why, what do you mean, Rachel—what do you mean? You say that he is a perfect stranger to you, and yet do not deny having wished her to have him."

"Let me explain."

"Explain, indeed!"

"But hear me. I have frequently seen him at Malvern, and solely with the view of subduing those feelings which she had inspired down here, I have expressed my admiration of his appearance—which was that of a perfect gentleman—and I think that I did on one occasion observe that he was just the style of man I should like her to have."

"But *is* he a gentleman?"

"Of that rest assured. He has a most distinguished bearing—the air of a nobleman. Depend upon it, brother, he is no common man."

"Well, but how did he communicate with her?"

"I know not."

"Vigilance, Rachel: this is *vigilance*!"

"I do not deserve reproaches; I am conscious—quite conscious of that. Their communications must have been made through one of my servants, whom he also took away in his carriage."

"His carriage!"

"Yes: and a splendid one I understand it was."

"But are you sure that it was his?"

"I have not the slightest doubt of it: the style of the man convinces me that it was. Nor should I feel surprised if we eventually discover that he is connected with some high family."

"Why then did he not propose in an open straightforward manner?"

"He may be romantic. He looks as if he were. I cannot account for it in any other way. As far as she is concerned, it strikes me, brother, that being unhappily determined to have a husband, she accepted this offer with alacrity, and I do think that under all the circumstances we ought to congratulate ourselves on his being, at all events, a gentleman."

"If I were quite sure of that—if I were sure of his being even decently connected—I should not care two straws about the fact of her having eloped."

"Then be sure of it, brother—quite sure. That he *is* well connected I'd stake my life."

"Well," said the general, thoughtfully, "we shall see—we shall see. But how shall we break this matter to her mother?"

"Is she upstairs?"

"No; she is out for an airing."

"How is she?"

"Better: much better. But we must before *her* make the best we can of it. The carriage is now passing through the lodge gate. You had better retire and leave it to me. But remember, when you meet, he is highly connected. Not a single doubt about it must be breathed."

"I *have* no doubt whatever on the subject."

"Very well: then retire. I'll break the ice before you meet."

The bell was rung, and Aunt Rachel retired; and when the carriage drew up to the door the general assisted his wife to alight, and led her into *one* of the parlours.

"Well," said he, "how are you now?"

"Better, dear; very much better," she replied. "I feel quite in spirits again."

"That's right. I've news for you—great news."

"Indeed!"

"George has soon found a husband at Malvern!"

"A husband!—George!—Are you jesting, dear?"

"No, indeed I am not."

"Well; but do you mean to say—"

"I mean to say that George has found a husband."

"But you do not really mean that she is married?"

"Yes: and to a fine dashing fellow, I understand: one who keeps a splendid carriage!"

"Impossible! Oh! my dear, I cannot believe it. Who on earth could have invented so ridiculous a tale!"

"Read this note," said the general, "and then tell me what you think of it."

She read the note, and then exclaimed—

"I'm all amazement! The wife of him whom your sister admired and wished her to have! Why, who on earth is he? Was it not wrong of your sister to countenance anything of this kind without our sanction?"

"She knew nothing of it! The first intimation was conveyed to her by that note."

"But of course she *knows* him?"

"She knows him to be a gentleman, and believes him to be highly connected."

"Is that all she knows? My poor child: into what hands have you fallen! Let me see your sister's letter."

"She is here."

"Here!"

"You will find her up-stairs. But remember, Anne, that the girl has at least escaped him upon whom she *would* have thrown herself away."

"Alas! my dear, we know not yet that she has chosen one even superior to him."

"Upon that point Rachel will satisfy you. Go to her at once. Do not be agitated. All will be well."

She then left the room; and as she did so, the general threw himself on a couch. "Who is this fellow?" he exclaimed: "who is he? Some one, doubtless, who has heard that she will have a brilliant fortune—in all probability, twenty times as much as that to which she will be entitled. Some *roué*, perhaps. And yet why not some influential man? His bearing is *distingué*! Why not a man of rank? He might have been there on a visit: he might at once have become enamoured of her, and she of him. Who knows? Such a man might have induced her to fly, she being under age, and he impatient to possess her. But where were they married? They could not have gone far! They could not have gone to Scotland! She says in her note 'in all probability, *before you read this*, I shall have become the wife of him whose appearance,' and so on. This, however, may have been merely a *ruse*. Yet, why should a ruse of this kind have been adopted? What necessity was there for it? They could not have been apprehensive of being pursued by Rachel! No: they were certainly married near Malvern. And yet—she being under age—how could he obtain a license? They might, it is true, have been married by banns; and if they were, I shall soon be able to discover, at all events, his *name*. But would he run such a risk? He might. Perhaps Rachel *knows*, and in her haste forgot to tell me. She *may* have heard. I'll go and ascertain."

He then proceeded to the drawing-room, and found his wife in tears.

"Come," said he, soothingly. "Come, Anne, be calm. She's a most ungrateful thoughtless girl, unworthy of being wept for."

"Still I must feel it: as a mother I must feel it."

"And I feel it too! Yet I cannot but think that if Rachel be right in her conjecture, we ought to regard the fact of her being settled as a blessing."

"What conjecture, brother?" inquired Aunt Rachel.

"Why, that of his being well connected."

"Oh! in that I feel perfectly sure that I am right."

"Very well: then instead of lamenting we ought to be glad. She would always have been a source of trouble and anxiety, and might have disgraced the family at last, by marrying some low vulgar dog! By the way, Rachel, did you ascertain, before you left, where the marriage took place?"

"No : I was in such a horrible state of agitation, and felt so exceedingly anxious to see you, that I had really no time to inquire ; but if they were married—as she expected they would be—before the note she left for me came into my hands, it of course could not have taken place many miles from Malvern."

"No, that's quite clear. I'll therefore go over at once and ascertain."

"Will that be worth while?" said Aunt Rachel.

"Why, I am anxious to know his name. I have now no clue to him whatever."

"But of course she will write in a day or two. Nothing *can* be more certain than that. And when she does write we shall know all about him."

"That's true," said the general ; "yes, that's true. It will *not* be worth while to go two hundred miles to know that of which we may be informed by the next post. No : I'll wait a day or two. I suppose that she *will* write."

"Of that be quite sure," said Aunt Rachel. "And now, my dear Anne, let us hope for the best. For my own part, I have not the slightest doubt of his being a man of rank and station. He is at all events a *gentleman*, and the knowledge of that ought alone to be sufficient to inspire us with patience until we know more. Now promise me, dear, that you will be patient ; will you?"

The promise was given ; but vainly given, patience being, under such circumstances, weak. She had feelings over which she possessed no control ; and, albeit she gave no expression to those feelings, they rendered her most unhappy.

Of course the whole of the conversation that day was based solely upon conjecture ; but neither of them had even the most remote idea of Georgiana having been united to Tom : they spoke of him but to congratulate themselves on the assumed fact of her having escaped him, and as this formed the general's principal theme, while that of Aunt Rachel was the conviction she had inspired of her niece having married some man of high station, Mrs. Brooke felt eventually somewhat relieved.

In the morning they were all extremely anxious for the arrival of the post. They scarcely *expected* to hear so soon, but their *hope* was realised ; for a note came from Georgiana, addressed to Mrs. Brooke, who on the instant opened it, and read as follows :—

"DEAREST MAMMA,—I was this day united to him whom I adore, and whose every earthly hope, I know, is centred in my happiness.

"Forgive me, mamma—pray forgive me—for taking this step without your sanction. The thought of you embitters this day, which else would be one of pure joy. God bless you ! God bless you ! Forgive—pray forgive

"GEORGIANA."

Having read this note hastily, she gave it to the general, who stood panting with impatience, and burst into tears.

"My poor, poor girl!" she exclaimed. "You have *my* forgiveness: you have *my* forgiveness!"

"Well," cried the general; "but we know no more now than we knew before. Georgiana, Georgiana What? That's the point! Of course *I'm* not mentioned. *I'm* nobody. Why not subscribe her name in full? Is she ashamed of it?"

"Probably," observed Aunt Rachel, "in her haste she forgot to do so."

"No such thing! A bride is proud to bear her husband's name. She never *forgets* to attach it to her own. The omission was wilful. She has some design: some motive which I'll ferret out. I'll go over to Malvern—I'll start this very day—I'll ascertain where she was married, and to whom."

"But, my dear brother, I cannot *to-day* undertake the journey!"

"Remain where you are. I'll take back the carriage you came in. Stop here with Anne. I'll not sleep until I have ascertained all."

He then ordered a pair of horses to be put to the carriage to take him as far as Newmarket, and in less than an hour he started for town.

On his arrival in London he called at once upon his friend Colonel Storr, and when he had explained to him all that he knew, they proceeded to Malvern together.

She soon got over her *first* love," observed Colonel Storr, on the road: "she was not very long about that. I feared that the attachment was more deeply rooted."

"I certainly had no fear of that kind myself," returned the general; "I felt that he would *soon* be forgotten."

"Well! The result has proved that you are right; but I thought that you would have had an immense deal more trouble in breaking off an attachment thus formed. It is perfectly clear that she wanted a husband and didn't care much whom she had. I hope she has a good one with all my heart. He must, at all events, be an improvement upon him whose wife, I have not the slightest doubt, she would have been had we not made that discovery. By the way, have you heard from that fellow since he left?"

"No; I called at his father's some three weeks ago, but he hadn't written even to him."

"Three weeks ago! I don't see how he *could* have written three weeks ago. He has sent a letter long before this, however, doubtless. I think I told you that Granby was very much pleased with him."

"Yes, he said so when he wrote to you before he left England; and I was not surprised at it. He is an excellent servant. I should never have parted with him but for that unfortunate affair."

"Which affair is, I hope, unfortunate no longer; for although it

may be said to have been the primary cause of this marriage, we have yet to learn that it is to be lamented. I wonder who he is. Some romantic young fellow, no doubt. He keeps his carriage, too! Well, we shall know all about him by-and-by."

Having travelled all night, they reached Worcester about eight o'clock in the morning, and breakfasted at the very inn to which Tom had taken Georgiana. Nothing, however, transpired there. They made no inquiries, and therefore learned nothing. They ordered fresh horses, paid the bill, and then pushed on to Malvern.

"Now," said the general, when they arrived, "of whom shall we first inquire?—the curate?"

"Either the curate or the clerk. It matters not, I apprehend, which. We had better have the landlord in; he'll be able to tell us where they *both* live."

Chump, the landlord, was accordingly summoned, and when he appeared, the general said, "I believe the carriage we came in is yours."

"I borrowed it, sir, for Mrs. Brooke," replied Chump: "I hope she's well, sir?"

"Quite. An elopement took place the other day here?"

"Yes, sir; and, strange to say, the gentleman that carried off the lady put up at my house."

"Indeed! What sort of a person is he?"

"Tip-top, sir. And one of the finest and most handsome men I ever saw."

"Indeed!"

"Oh! bless my life, yes, sir, quite!"

"You don't happen to know his name?"

"Why, let me see. I've heard it. Bless my life, now, how very odd. I can't, for the soul of me, recollect now, but I know he was married at Worcester."

"At Worcester! Are you quite sure of that?"

"Oh, I've ascertained that, sir, beyond all doubt!"

"Then just tell them to put the horses in again immediately."

"Stop," said Colonel Storr: "have you heard that they were married by license?"

"License, sir: no, they were married by banns, and the banns were published here, sir, and nobody none the wiser."

"Then, of course, we shall be able to ascertain his name here."

"Oh yes, sir, certainly! I'll send, if you please, at once, and get it from the clerk."

"Where does the clerk live?"

"Just down there, sir."

"Then," said the general, "we'll go ourselves."

The house was pointed out, and they went with the conviction that Georgiana had married a man of some importance.

"You are the clerk of the parish, I believe?" said the general.

"I am, sir," replied the clerk.

"A gentleman called here some time since to direct the banns of marriage to be published between him and Georgiana Brooke."

"A gentleman's *servant*, sir, called some time since to have the banns put up between him and Georgiana Brooke."

"A gentleman's *servant*!"

"He looked like one, sir."

"Ay," said Colonel Storr; "perhaps the servant of the gentleman."

"No, sir: he was the man himself."

"And what was his name?"

"His name was Thomas Todd, sir."

"What!" exclaimed the general, fiercely. "What!"

"Thomas Todd."

"*Destruction!* Oh! that I had him here now within my grasp! I'd strangle him! I'd tear the villain's *heart* out! Oh! Storr, I shall go mad!"

And thus he raved about the room, while the colonel stood astounded.

"Here is the book," observed the clerk.

"*Perish* the book!" exclaimed the general, "and those whose names are entered in it! Curse them!—curse them *both!*"

"General!" said Colonel Storr. "General! calm your passion. Come! control it. Where is the entry?" he added, turning to the clerk.

"Here it is, sir!—here."

"I see."

"And the parties were married at Worcester."

"And do you call that a legal marriage?" cried the general.

"Oh yes, sir; it's *legal* enough."

"Are you sure of it?"

"Quite, sir: oh, yes, sir; quite."

"I'll half murder them both. I could shoot him like a *dog!*—like a dog."

Colonel Storr placed a fee in the hand of the clerk, and led the general away, uttering the fiercest imprecations.

Immediately on their return to the inn, the landlord was summoned again; and, as he entered, the general, with an aspect of ferocity, said—

"Did you not tell me, sir, that the fellow whom you had here was a gentleman?"

"Yes, sir; and he certainly was a gentleman!"

"You lie, sir! He was but a gentleman's servant."

"Impossible! Oh! there must be some mistake."

"He looked like a gentleman's servant: he was dressed like a gentleman's servant."



"I beg pardon, sir! He was dressed in the highest style of fashion. Who says that he was not?"

"The clerk, sir!—the clerk!"

"Then he tells a flaming falsehood, sir. But *I'll* see about this. I'll teach him! My character's as good as his, any day: I'll not have it taken away by *him*, neither."

Swelling with indignation, Chump then left the room, and proceeded at once to the house of the clerk.

"Mr. Jowles," said he, "What do you mean?"

"What do I mean?"

"Ay; what do you mean?"

"What do I mean by what?"

"Why, what do you mean by saying that the gentleman that came here to put up the banns was dressed like a gentleman's servant?"

"'Cause he was," replied Jowles.

"It's false!" cried Chump. "He was dressed in tip-top style!"

"Why, what do you mean by tip-top style? Hadn't he a livery waistcoat on?"

"A livery waistcoat! No."

"I say he had."

"But I say he had not. His waistcoat was made of fine white cassimere."

"I say it was not then."

"I say that it was! And his trousers—"

"His trousers! He didn't wear trousers; but corduroy smalls and top-boots."

"I say he had trousers and French boots on. Perhaps you'll say he didn't wear a stock."

"No more he did! He wore a white handkerchief and a black frock-coat."

"A black *frock*-coat! He wore a blue dress-coat with figured gilt buttons."

"He didn't!"

"He did. I'll swear that he did!"

"I'll swear that he *didn't* then, there! I mean the man that ran away with Miss Brooke."

"And I mean the man that ran away with Miss Brooke."

"Then I'll swear that when he came here he was dressed as I've described."

"But I'll swear that he was not!"

"Now, how *can* you swear that? Did you see him come here?"

"See him come here! Do you think I don't know him? Didn't he put up at my house?"

"I don't care a button about where he put up at. The question is, *Did* you see him come here?"

"No, I didn't."

"How can you swear, then, that when he did come he was not dressed as I say he was? What's the use of putting yourself in a passion? It's clear that he was *nothing* but a gentleman's servant. I could see that by the rage of the young lady's father. Might he not have had a new suit made for the occasion, which he wore while in your house, and threw off when he came to me?"

"He *might*: certainly he *might*."

"Very well, then. Why should we quarrel about it? When he lived with you, he was dressed as you describe: when he came to me, he was dressed as I describe. It amounts to nothing more."

"I see it now: I see: I see it all. But he *acted* so much *like* a gentleman!"

"Very likely! He did, however, but act the part."

"Well, I never was so much deceived in my life. But I see it now, and I'm sorry that I was so warm."

"Oh! never mind that."

"But I *was* warm—too warm—I know that I was; but as you now see the mistake I fell into, why let's be as good friends as ever."

"With all my heart," replied Jowles, extending his hand; "I bear no malice."

"Jowles," said Chump, "I owe you a bottle of wine for this. Come in and let us have it the first opportunity."

"I will," replied Jowles; and when they had shaken hands again, Chump departed.

Resolved on clearing his character of the stain which the general had so unceremoniously cast upon it, Chump hastened back to the inn, and on entering the room in which his guests were, exclaimed, "I've found it out!—I've got to the bottom of it!—he must have had two suits of clothes, one of which he wore here, and the other when he went to the clerk."

"No doubt!" said Colonel Storr. "We have arrived at the same conclusion."

"Well, I'm very glad of that, sir. I hope you are now satisfied that I had no intention to deceive."

"Oh! we are quite satisfied of that now—quite. Just send us in some slight refreshment."

"What would you like, sir?"

"Anything you have; but send it in immediately."

Chump withdrew, and the general, who continued to pace the room, exclaimed, "We'll pursue them, Storr: we'll pursue them. They can't have travelled far. She has no money, and I'm quite sure that he hasn't much. They are therefore certain to be somewhere near."

"I don't see," said Colonel Storr, "that we shall do any good by pursuing them."

"But I'm determined to hunt them up."

"Well, but what can you do if you even succeed? The thing's done. You can't claim her now."

"Claim her! I'd rather perish than claim her, if I could. Claim her! No! I cast her off for ever."

"Then why pursue them?"

"To have my revenge upon that low-bred villain!"

Colonel Storr shook his head, and the general continued—"We shall ascertain which way they went when we get back to Worcester. We shall be able to find out there. We'll trace them."

"I think we had better not."

"But, Storr, I *will*."

"Well. You will of course do as you please; but I wish that I possessed sufficient influence over you to induce you to look at this matter like a man of the world. Suppose that you had been in this fellow's position, would you not have acted precisely as he has acted? Would you not have viewed it as a devilish lucky chance? Would you not have embraced the opportunity which offered—"

"It matters not, Storr, what I should have done: *he* has done it, and I'll be revenged."

"His only crime is that he has outwitted us. We tried to defeat him, and have been ourselves defeated. However angry we may be it amounts but to that. We thought it was our game when it was his."

"Why how you talk, Storr? Really you amaze me! Was it a *fair* game?"

"*He* thought so: and so should we have thought had we been in his position."

"Pray to Heaven that *your* daughter, Storr, may never be stolen from you as mine has been from me."

"I do pray to Heaven that she never may. If she were to be, I should feel it as deeply as you do. I should be enraged, doubtless, as you are now. But should I spurn the advice of a friend, who perceived that my only revenge should be to leave *her* to her own bitter reflections, and to treat her vulgar husband with contempt?"

"If it be only to show the contempt I have for him, and to plant the germs of bitter reflection in her *heart*, I'll pursue them."

Luncheon was then produced, and in less than half an hour they were on their way back to Worcester.

Jones, who, in consequence of what he had heard, had been on the *qui vive* the whole of the morning, no sooner saw them alight on their return, then he knew, from the description which Tom had given him, that one of them was the general. He therefore at once named the subject to the proprietor of the inn, and having given him the necessary instructions, waited anxiously about the yard.

"Waiter!" said the general, on being shown into a room, "send in the landlord."

The waiter immediately communicated with the landlord, who at once obeyed the summons.

"Landlord," said the general, who had by this time become somewhat calm, "how many posting-houses are there here?"

"There are several, sir," replied the landlord, "but this is considered the principal one."

"Have you had a wedding party at your house lately? I mean within four or five days?"

"We had a party, sir, four or five days ago, from Malvern."

"Oh! from Malvern!"

"Yes, the gentleman had a carriage from here, sir, in which he went over and brought the lady back."

"They were married in this town, then?"

"Yes, sir, and afterwards had breakfast here."

"Oh! indeed. How long did they stop?"

"Not more than two hours."

"And where did they go when they left here?"

"I don't exactly know, sir, myself; but Jones, the mail-coach man, who is now on the premises, knows, I believe, all about them."

"What's his name?"

"Jones, sir. Shall I send him in?"

"I wish you would."

The landlord withdrew, and the colonel said—"Now, if you do not appear to be angry, we shall be able to ascertain all. We must, in the first place, give him some wine. We shall be able to get nothing out of *him* without that."

Wine was accordingly ordered, and when Jones had learned what the landlord had said, he proceeded to make his appearance.

"Mr. Jones, I believe?" said the general, as Jones entered.

"Yes, sir; my name is Jones."

"Take a seat, Mr. Jones: and help yourself to a glass of wine."

Jones took a seat, and had a glass of wine, and said—"Gentlemen, good health!" but at the same time thought that that was not the way to catch him.

"You have had a wedding here, Mr. Jones," said the general, "have you not?"

"Yes, sir: and a very merry wedding it was."

"Very merry was it?"

"Very, sir; very. I'd the honour of giving the happy bride away."

"Oh! indeed. Did you know her previously?"

"I never set eyes on her before that morning."

"Oh! then you only knew the bridegroom?"

"I didn't know much about him before, sir; but as he took a fancy

to me, and as I took a fancy to him, and as he asked me to go to church with him, I did."

"Exactly; and you spent the day with them, I suppose?"

"I did; and a very happy day we had of it, too."

"Here?"

"Oh no; we went to Cheltenham."

"Indeed! Then they are at Cheltenham now, I suppose?"

"No; they left the next day."

"And where are they now? Can you tell me? The fact is, Mr. Jones, I have something of importance to communicate to them. It is hence that I wish to know where they are now."

"Well, I can't exactly say, sir, and that's the truth; but they are either in Liverpool, London, or Newmarket."

"*Liverpool*, London, or Newmarket! You mean to say, I presume, that you know they are somewhere?"

"Yes, somewhere in one of those places."

"But in which do you think they're most likely to be?"

"Why, I think the most likely place is London."

"But, of course, Mr. Jones, having spent the day with them, you know where they *thought* of going when they left Cheltenham?"

"I know that they thought of going to London; but they were very undecided about it. I can, however, tell you *who* knows where they are."

"Who is that?"

"His father, who is living at Newmarket. He's certain to know. By-the-by, do you know the bride's father, sir?"

"Yes."

"Is he angry at all, sir?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because the bride spoke of him all day so much, that I thought she was afraid that he would be; and I'm sure he's no reason to be angry about it, for she's got a man who'll make a most excellent husband—not a poor finniking fool of a fellow, but a man, and nothing but a man, who'll make her as happy as the birds in the air!—a trump, sir; what I call a trump."

"Are you a father, Mr. Jones?"

"Yes: I've five of 'em at home."

"And could you, as a father, feel justified in giving your countenance to this marriage, which you knew to be a clandestine one?"

"Yes: I can't say I knew it until the very morning; but if I'd known it months before it would have been all the same to me."

"But had she been *your* daughter, how would you have liked it?"

"How should I have liked it! I *should* have been an ass if I hadn't been pleased with the fact of her having a man like that. He's a credit to the community. A lord needn't be ashamed to own him. You can't know him, sir: I'm sure, if you did, you wouldn't have asked me how I should have liked it."

"But suppose, Mr. Jones, you objected to him?"

"Objected to him? What is there in him to object to? Doesn't he bear a good character?"

"Why, as far as his *character* is concerned, he certainly has borne a good one."

"Very well, then. His character is good; he's a fine young man; a handsome fellow; warm-hearted, generous, high-spirited, affectionate; in short, a man calculated to make a woman happy. What then is there in him to object to? Fathers, sir, are frequently fools: they frequently study their own pride instead of their children's happiness: they'd rather marry a child to a wretch who happened to move in a brilliant sphere than give her to an honourable man if in a position below their own. What care they for their children's happiness? What *can* they care for their children's feelings? We all know what women are made of, and isn't it cruel to blast their hopes, and thus make them wretched for life? I say that it's barbarous, sir, and if that lady's father was here, sir, I'd tell him exactly the same."

"Mr. Jones," interposed Colonel Storr, "at which church were they married?"

"At that, sir, just over the way to the left."

"Thank you. We feel obliged to you for the information you have given. Good morning."

"Good morning, gentlemen," said Jones, as he rose. "But if you should see that lady's father, it will be an act of friendship to tell him that if he behaves like a man he'll take her again to his heart."

"Good morning, Mr. Jones," said the colonel, "good morning."

"I wish you good morning," said Jones, who bowed, and with feelings of high satisfaction withdrew.

"The fellow's enthusiastic," observed Colonel Storr, as the general paced the room thoughtfully. "Well: what will be the next step to take?"

"Why the next step will be to return!" replied the general. "I suppose that fellow told the truth when he said they had quitted Cheltenham?"

"I haven't the slightest doubt of that."

"Then it will, of course, be useless to pursue them. Suppose we return to London at once?"

"Will it be worth while to look at the register?"

"Perish the register! No, I'll not see it."

"Shall I go and see it, that we may be sure?"

"Well, well: do so, do so, Storr, and I'll give the necessary orders."

The colonel went accordingly, and having seen the register, duly attested, returned.

"You have seen it, of course?" said the general.

"I have."

"Then as we *can* do nothing more here, we had better start."

"Have you ordered a chaise?"

"Yes. We shall be able to reach town to-night, and then proceed—that is, if you will accompany me—to Newmarket in the morning."

The colonel consented to this arrangement, and when the chaise was announced they started for London, where they arrived about half-past ten, and feeling fatigued, retired early to rest.

In the morning, immediately after breakfast, they started again, and on reaching Newmarket, they sent for Todd, in order to hear what he had to say.

"Mr. Todd," said Boots, who had been charged with the message, "two gentlemen at the Rutland wants to see you."

"Two gentlemen wants to see me at the Rutland!" cried Todd: "who are they?"

"Oh, they're two gentlemen."

"Well, but who are they? You know 'em, of course. You know everybody. Why don't you tell me who they are?"

"I wasn't to *say*! but I do know one on 'em."

"Well, and who's he?"

"Why, it's General Brooke."

"Then tell 'em I can't come. If they want *me*, they know where to find me. Stop," he added: "second thoughts is best. I *will* go. Polly, go and bring down my best coat. Now, what'll you have to take?"

"Oh, I don't care: just a thimbleful o' rum."

The rum was drawn, and the coat was brought down, and when he had succeeded in getting it on he walked with Boots up to the Rutland Arms.

"Now, Mr. Todd," said the general, fiercely, as Todd was shown into the room; "now, sir, where's your son?"

"Do you want him, sir?" inquired Todd.

"I ask you where he is."

"Well, I can't exactly answer that question."

"'Tis false, sir. You *can* do so, if you please!"

"Can any mortal flesh know better than I know whether I can or not?"

"No quibbling, sir, with me. You well know where he is now."

"Have it so, general, *if* you please. I'm not ill-mannered enough to cast in *your* teeth what you've cast in mine. I say that I *don't* know where he is. I know where he was, but where he is now, I shan't know till the mornin'."

"You know, I suppose, what he has had the *impudence* to do?"

"Impudence. If you call it impudence, he certainly has had the *impudence* to marry a lady who loves him, and who'll be as happy with him as she *could* have been with the very first lord in the land."

"Bah! Don't talk to me. He's a villain."

"No he's not."

"I say that he is! a vulgar, low-bred, contemptible villain."

"Don't use sich hard words, sir. *Don't* use 'em! Because I can't stand it."

"*You* can't stand it! What do I care about that?"

"Perhaps nothin'; but if you force me to speak my mind, I may say suffen I don't want to say; and thus widen the breach between you and your daughter, sir; which I should now be sorry to do."

"She is *my* daughter no longer. I disown her."

"I hope now the thing's done, you'll think better of it, sir."

"Never! I have cast her off! and I'll make that scoundrel *remember* it the longest day he has to live."

"His memory, I hope, will not want to be refreshed."

"Insolence!"

"Insolence, General Brooke?"

"Ay, insolence! How dare you attempt to bandy words with me?"

"Well, I don't know so much about bandying words; but you sent for me to have some conversation with me, didn't you? I came 'cause I thought you'd be open to reason: if I hadn't, I wouldn't ha' come at all. I've taken already, sir, more from you, than I'd have taken from any other man upon earth; and if this is to be it, and nothen but this, I'd better say 'Good day,' at once. You've called him a scoundrel—"

"He is a scoundrel! a mean, low, cunning, deceitful scoundrel!"

"He's no more a scoundrel than you are."

"What!"

"I say that he's no more a scoundrel than you are. And since you come to meanness, cunning, and deceit, who set him the example? What did you want to send him abroad for? Wasn't it to better his condition? to enlarge his mind among the foreign powers? to teach him all the continental languages, and thus to polish him up like a genelman? Was that open, candid, and manly; or was it mean, low cunning, and deceitful?"

"I never told him all this."

"No; but a friend of yours did, who was set on by you! a genelman named Colonel Storr! But you as good as said it yourself. When you called upon me in your carriage to know if I'd heard from him, what did you say? Didn't you say that you only called because you was anxious for his welfare? Was that there cunning? Was that deceit? Did you care a single *button* about what became of him? Wouldn't you have been glad to hear he'd gone to the bottom of the sea, so *great* was your anxiety for his welfare?"

"Silence! Do you think I'll submit to be talked to by *you*?"

"I shouldn't have mentioned these things at all, only you talked about *cunning* and *deceit*. But, even now, if you'd do one thing, I'd



beg your pardon humbly. I don't care a bit about myself: treat me as you like: nor do I care so much about Tom; he can fight his own battles as well as I can; but if you would forgive your child, I'd fall upon my *knees* and thank you."

"Never! Never, while I've breath!"

"I still hope you'll think better of it. The thing is done; and what's done, can't be undone. Your vengeance now can do no good. It can only make her unhappy."

"Where is she? Tell me where she is."

"If you'll promise to forgive her—I don't care about your being friendly with him—but if you'll promise that you'll forgive *her*, I'll let you know where they live the first thing in the mornin'. *Will* you forgive her?"

"No! Never!"

"Then why do you want to know where they live?"

"That I may go and wring her heart."

"Then you shall *never* know from me."

"I'll hunt them up."

"And so you may; but I'll not put you on the scent."

"But, Mr. Todd," said Colonel Storr, who felt ashamed of the part he had taken, and who winced under Todd's illustration of *cunning* and *deceit*: "are they living in a style of comfort?"

"They are, sir. Yes, sir; they are."

"But whence do they derive their funds?"

"From me. I am not a poor man. I've been careful all my life; and if Tom wants a thousand, he can have it. I'll take care they want for nothen. All I think of is her happiness; and as, in course, she can't be happy unless the general forgives her, that's all I care about now. I haven't the pleasure of knowing you, sir," he continued, as the general left the room; but if you'd persuade him only to forgive her, you can't think how grateful I should be. I do all I can, and so does Tom; but still she must think, for women has feelings. Do you see them two horses, sir?" he added, taking the colonel to the window. *They're* beauties, sir, ain't they?"

"Very fine ones, indeed."

"They're theirs, sir; they are. I bought 'em t'other day. The near un's hers, the off un's Tom's. I'm goin' to send 'em up in a day or two to 'em. I *will* make 'em happy if I can; but while the general holds out so, she must, as I said afore, think. Now, do you try to bring him round: do, sir, pray. I don't want him to ask Tom to his house. All I want him to do, is to say he'll forgive her."

"Well, Mr. Todd, we'll see what can be done."

"Thank you, sir. God bless you."

"Of course, we can't expect that he'll do this at once. He may, in a few days, be somewhat more calm."

"Exactly, sir; I understand what you mean. I ain't a bit surprised

at his being hot, now; but I hope, for her sake, that he'll think better of it."

"Well! we shall see. But don't say another word likely to be offensive to him."

"No, sir; I'll not."

"Are you ready?" said the general, who returned at this moment.

"Yes," replied the colonel: "quite."

"General," said Todd, "I'm sorry if I've said a single word to offend you. If I have, all I can say is, I beg your pardon, and wish you, sir, good afternoon."

The general—as Todd bowed and quitted the room—turned his back upon him with an expression of contempt.

"Did you see a pair of horses pass while you were out?" inquired the colonel.

"A pair of bays?"

"Yes."

"I couldn't help admiring them. Whom do they belong to?"

"One is Georgiana's, the other is Tom's."

"What!"

"They were bought by Todd the other day for them. He says that he *will* do all he can to make them happy, and only hopes that you will eventually forgive her."

"If I ever *do*, Storr, may I perish!"

The colonel said no more. They entered the chaise which was waiting for them, and almost in silence proceeded to the Hall.

Mrs. Brooke was the first who saw the chaise approach, and the moment she perceived it she called to Aunt Rachel, and went down with her to the door.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, when the general had alighted, "I've been in a most dreadful state of suspense. Have you ascertained, dear?"

"Yes; I have ascertained; I have ascertained all."

"Well!" said Aunt Rachel—"well! well! and who is he?"

"Who *is* he!" cried the general, in a tone of bitter irony. "The man whom you so *much* admired!—a person of *distinguished* bearing!—one of the nobility, *doubtless*!—a man of *rank* and *station*!—a *gentleman*, at *all* events! Rachel, you're a fool!"

"You are—a gentleman."

"But, my dear," cried Mrs. Brooke, "who is he? Tell me, pray, who is he?"

"Why, this person of distinguished bearing—this elegant sprig of nobility—this man of rank and station—whom *she* so admired—bah! I'm ashamed of her—"

"Brother!" exclaimed Aunt Rachel, indignantly—"brother! you're a brute! Do you think that *I'll* be thus insulted? Am I to submit to your vulgar spleen? No!"

"My dear, dear Rachel!" exclaimed Mrs. Brooke. "Indeed,

indeed he didn't intend it ; he knew not what he was saying at the time."

"Anne!" said the general, sternly, "I know well what I am saying. The man whom she actually *wished* her to have, is no other than that low-bred scoundrel."

"What, Thomas?"

"Ay! *He* is the gentleman : he is the man whom she wished her to marry!—"

"Brother! you wrong me!" exclaimed Aunt Rachel. "You wrong me every way; I'll not endure it. I knew nothing of the man; you *know* that I knew nothing of him; you know my object in saying what I *did* say, and yet you insult me. I'll *not* endure it. I am not *compelled* to put up with it, nor will I."

She then indignantly left the room—told the postboys, who were waiting to be paid, not to leave—desired her maid to prepare on the instant—dressed herself with all possible speed; and, while the general was raving, and the colonel was endeavouring to soothe the feelings of Mrs. Brooke, she entered the chaise with her maid, and was off.

The general, on hearing the chaise start, recollected that he had not paid the postboys. He therefore left the room, and at once ascertained that his sister had quitted the Hall.

"Let her go!" he exclaimed. "Let her go. She's off!" he added, on re-entering the room.

"What, Rachel, dear?" cried Mrs. Brooke. "Is it possible?"

"It is—both possible and pleasing. Let her go. She, doubtless, thinks that I shall follow her. She's mistaken—mistaken."

"I'm very, very sorry for it."

"I'm not. I'm glad she's gone. She's a hypocrite, Anne! depend upon that. This marriage, no doubt, was promoted by her. If she were not guilty, would she steal off thus? She knew it all from first to last. She *sanctioned* it, and then came here with the villanous lie of her being convinced that he was at least a *gentleman*!"

That this conjecture was most unjust is a fact which need not be stated here. It will be, however, correct to state, that as Aunt Rachel felt quite convinced that her brother imagined that the match had been absolutely sanctioned by her, she at once resolved on having *revenge*, and, in pursuance of this resolution, sent for Todd the moment she reached Newmarket.

Boots, as before, was the messenger; and it was with him a labour of love, for he knew that he should get another "thimbleful" of rum, which, being interpreted, means half a quatern.

"I tell you what it is, Mr. Todd," said he, "you seems to be about as big a man as the prime minister. You're wanted particular again at the Rutland."

"Agin!" cried Todd. "Why, what's up now? Who is it?"

"A lady."

"A what?"

"A lady."

"A young 'un?"

"No; she's rayther old in the tooth; but a lady for all that."

"I know. It's the general's wife, ain't it?"

"No, it ain't her; but she came back in the chaise the general had."

"Well, who else can it be?"

"I don't know. It ain't her."

"Well, I'll come up and see who it is. Here, Polly, bring down my coat agin, will you! What'll you have to take?—a drop o' rum?"

"Well, I don't care if I do—the leasest drop."

The rum was drawn and duly drank, and when the best coat had been brought and put on, Todd accompanied Boots to the inn.

"Mr. Todd, I believe?" said Aunt Rachel, as he entered the room which she occupied.

"Jist so, ma'am."

"You will excuse me for having thus troubled you, I'm sure. My name is Brooke: General Brooke's sister: and consequently Georgiana's aunt."

"Oh! indeed, ma'am. From Malvern?"

"Yes. My object in sending for you, Mr. Todd, is simply to ascertain how your son and Georgiana are at present situated."

"You're very good, ma'am; but in what respect do you mean?"

"I speak with reference to their ability to live in a style of comfort."

"Oh! yes, ma'am; I'll take care of that."

"I am happy to hear that you have the power to do so. She cannot claim her money for some months, as you are aware. You know, of course, that when of age she will be entitled to twenty thousand pounds?"

"I have heard that she would be entitled to something; but really I didn't know what."

"That is the sum which my sister left her, and I was thinking that, although she deceived me, she ought not to be allowed to want."

"You're very good, but she shan't want, ma'am. I'll take care they want for nothing. But, ma'am, ain't you angry with her?"

"Why, I must say I felt vexed, Mr. Todd: I certainly must say that. Still, under all the circumstances, if she should feel disposed to write to me, I shall not treat her letter with contempt."

"I'm very glad to hear you say this, ma'am; and since you're so kind, I do hope you'll be good enough to try to persuade the general to forgive her."

"With him I have nothing now to do. This affair has been the cause of my separating from him. I have just left the Hall, and shall never return; but if at any time Georgiana *should* want assistance, let her write to me."

"God bless you, ma'am. For her sake, I feel most grateful. Her heart will be full when she hears of it, I know. Are you going back to Malvern, ma'am?"

"Yes: I hope to be in London this evening, and to-morrow I intend to go on. Have you heard from your son within the last day or two?"

"Yes, I have, ma'am; and I shall hear agin from him in the mornin'."

"Well, I'm not disposed to enter into this affair now: I have no desire to say a single word having reference to the *propriety* of the proceeding, but I hope that your son will be kind to Georgiana, and conduct himself in all respects well."

"Be sure of that, ma'am: be quite sure of that. He's safe, ma'am, to be about the best husband goin' She couldn't have had a better than he'll be nohow."

"If I find that his future conduct justifies respect he shall not want a friend."

"Heaven bless you, ma'am, and thank you. You've taken a great weight off my mind, and I'm sure that you will off of theirs."

She then rang the bell, and as the chaise was quite ready, Todd, with many earnest expressions of gratitude, saw her safely off.

His first object then was to write to Tom; and as he, on all occasions, found this job of writing to be a strong job, he shut himself up, and before ten that night, had succeeded in producing the following letter:—

"DEER TOMMEY,—This kums with My kined luv Toe yew opin that yew And yewer deer wife is well As it leeves Me At pressant and thenk God fore It i rite this to nite Toe be reddey termorrer corse the jenneral sent fore me too day and wen I whent too the rutland too im he Begins fore too Blow up like bricks and At fust I guv im As good as he sent but i thort it best arter too draw in my orns corse i thort i cood Do more with im well there was Another nob with im wich dident say mutch so wen the jenneral Left us alone i arst im to purswade im fore too think better off It and he sed he wood and So arter a Bit thay both whent off together and In about A cupple off ours arter boots kums down agin and Ses ses He Mr. todd ses he theres A lady at The rutland witch wants yew Now so Up I goes agin and Who shood It be but georgeyanneys ant so she ses ses she ow is thay sittivated In life so Ses i mum they dont want And sharn't want Fore nothen so Ses she ime glad off It the jenneral and me ses She is ad a row about It and if georgeyanney ses she likes to rite a

letter let er and If she dus ses she i sharnt trete It with kontempt shes A good un tommey she is and nothen but ses she if he treets er well and Goes on Rite he sharnt ses she want Fore a frend so Yew see tommey this Is all rite and georgeyanney must rite ses she she'll Have twenty thousan wen she kums off age and So thats all rite and ive got the osses regglar bewtys and no Mistek and i means to send em wen I nose were Too send em Too and dont Let the jenneral no were yew old out it aint off no youse yet i no but he's safe too kum round bine by and so giv my luv too georgeyanney and mind wot Yewer arter and Get er too Rite too er Ant and So no more At pressant from yewer evver affeckshunnate father

“TIMOTHY TODD.

“N.B. as i dont rite Mutch off a Stick yew no yew can reed this hear but needent sho it too anny Mortle flesh.”

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE FIRST VISIT.

DURING the first month Tom was in an absolute delirium of love : he thought of nothing—dreamt of nothing—cared for nothing but his own—his dear Georgiana. Everything was new to him, and so delightful ! She sang to him—played to him—read to him—and conversed with him, while he blessed and caressed her from morning till night in a state of unmingled rapture. The idea of going out without her never occurred to him. Wherever he went she went too. He was enchanted with her—she was so lovely—so amiable—so good ; and she was enchanted with him—he was so affectionate—so devoted—so kind.

“My darling George !” he would often exclaim, “you’re an angel out and out ! Didn’t I tell you that we should be happy—eh ? Didn’t I tell you so ? Who wouldn’t marry to be as happy as we are ! Why, I love you every day better and better ! I don’t know what to *do* with myself, I love you so dearly. You’re a duck, George, and that’s about the bottom of it. Give us a song, and I’ll smother you with kisses. Take a few to begin with. Why, I could *eat* you ! Now then, strike up ; but don’t look at me with them beautiful eyes ; if you *do*, I don’t know what’ll be the consequence, you *darling*.”

Having passed this month in London, Tom began to imagine that some slight change would impart an additional zest for joy ; and as Aunt Rachel—to whom Georgiana had frequently written—had given them permission to visit her at Malvern, they decided on taking a trip for a week, and started at once, leaving Mary in town.

"Now, my love," said Georgiana, on reaching Worcester, where they dined, "you will not—I hope that you will not—be angry at what I am going to say, dear; will you?"

"Angry!" replied Tom. "Angry! How can I be angry with you? It ain't to be done! and no mistake. I can't be angry at what *you* say, 'cause I know what you say is exact the correct thing, and nothing at all *but*!"

"Well, then, dear Tom, I only wish to observe that although my aunt is a kind good creature, she is very particular indeed."

"And very proper, too. I shall suit her, my love, to a hair."

"She entertains a very high opinion of you now, and it would be, of course, extremely painful to me, if, by any inadvertence, by any want of circumspection, you should forfeit the opinion she entertains."

"Leave that to me, my love: leave that to me. Depend upon this, there's no nob in the land which 'll act more like a nob than me. I know what you mean, my darling George; but don't be a mite alarmed. If there's any man alive which can act as a gentleman, I'll be the man now, and no mistake about it."

"You see, my love, it is of little consequence when we are alone; and I know that you have too much good sense not to perceive that having been comparatively unaccustomed to society you cannot be perfectly conversant with its forms. Men of the most brilliant genius, dear Tom, will often—very often—fail, where the most unintellectual persons succeed."

"I see! I see! 'cause they're more used to it."

"Exactly; and, therefore, until one feels perfectly at home in society, it is wise to say as little as possible. When we are silent, those around us are willing to give us credit for the possession of much more knowledge than we have."

"I see! It's an out-and-out dodge to be silent when a man knows he doesn't know much. But *I'll* cook it. Don't be at all afraid of me. I won't say a word as ain't regular and spicy. If she didn't know who I was, I'd pound she'd take me for a high-blown nob."

"You'll excuse me, my love, I hope, for naming the matter."

"Excuse you! Why, what do you think I'm made of? Don't I know that what you say to me is all for my own good? Excuse you! Why, I love you all the better for it. Don't I want to learn? and how can I learn if you don't learn me? Ain't it a blessing to have a wife which knows things; and don't I know that you know more than I know, a precious sight. I should *think* so! And, therefore, don't say another syllable about it. See how I'll conduct myself, that's all; see. If she don't say, if I ain't a gentleman born, I *act* like one, I'll be bound to be blistered."

"Well, my love, I'm glad that you appreciate the importance of being circumspect; that is to say, of being cautious. I should not

have mentioned it, but that I know how exceedingly particular my aunt is, my dear."

"It's all right: all right. I'll be up to the mark. If I do make a fool of myself, tell me, that's all. I'll do the trick as spicy as any gentleman going; and that you'll see, and no mistake. Why, I wouldn't hurt your delicate little feelings for the world."

"I do not believe that you would, dear, willingly."

"Not a bit of it. I'd die first! You know how I love you; so don't be afraid. And now, my angel, as time's getting on, don't you think we had better be off?"

"I am quite inclined to start, my love, if you are."

"Well, then, let's be off at once. While you're putting on your traps, I'll go and see after the chaise."

Georgiana rang the bell, and withdrew; and on her return—the chaise being ready—they pursued their journey to Malvern. They said but little on the road. With Georgiana locked in his arms, Tom was studying a variety of speeches which, in his view, were calculated to make an impression, while she, apprehensive that he would commit himself, almost dreaded the visit.

"Well," said he, after a very long pause, "we're cutting along! getting very near now! But I say, George: what am I to call her? I don't want, you know, to make a mess of it. Ain't she my aunt as well as yours? And ain't I to call her aunt?"

"No, my love."

"Then am I to say, 'Yes, ma'am,' and 'No, ma'am?'"

"Oh! dear me, no. Say 'Yes,' or 'No,' plainly. Never address her as 'Ma'am.' You might sometimes say 'My dear madam.'"

"Yes, that's it! That's the ticket! 'My dear madam.' I knew it was something. Here we are!" he added. "There's the inn—the blessed inn—your aunt passed while I was having the stout. I wouldn't miss having a bottle of stout at that house before we leave for any money, for if it hadn't been for that, I shouldn't have found out my own darling George."

The chaise now drew up to the gate, and Aunt Rachel went down to receive them, and having most affectionately embraced Georgiana, she shook hands with Tom, and at once made him feel that she was indeed happy to see him.

"You have not dined, my love, I presume?" said Aunt Rachel, having conducted them into the drawing-room.

"Yes, dear aunt," replied Georgiana. "We dined at Worcester."

"Oh! Well, come then, at once, dear, and take off your things. Mr. Todd, you will excuse us for a short time? I hope," she added, again taking his hand, "that you will here feel perfectly at home."

Tom bowed respectfully; and, by his silence, somewhat hushed Georgiana's fears.

"She ain't a bad sort," said he, on being left alone. "If she goes



on like this, it'll do. I must take care and not put my foot in it, that's all; and, as the least said 's the soonest mended, I'd better, before her, shut up shop."

During this short soliloquy, Georgiana was warmly caressed by Aunt Rachel, upon whose neck she had fallen in tears.

"Dear aunt!" she exclaimed. "Oh, this is indeed kind. I did not expect it: I do not deserve it; and yet, I thought, that you would forgive me."

"Come, my love, come: dry your eyes," said Aunt Rachel. "Do not let him see that you have been weeping. It may give him pain. Why, he really is very, very handsome, George. If he be as kind as he is handsome, I cannot be surprised at your loving him so much."

"He is kind: oh! most kind. He's all devotion. You will, I know, dear aunt, excuse any little mistake into which he may fall?"

"Why, of course, my love. But the mistakes which he'll make will be but few, for I perceive he has good sense."

"He has; but he is not yet *highly* polished."

"Now, don't be at all apprehensive on that point. He and I shall get on together very well, I know, therefore, don't say another word about it."

They then returned to Tom; who, as they entered, rose, and taking Georgiana to the window, said—

"Why, you've been crying!"

"Slightly, dear," replied Georgiana. "My aunt was so kind, I couldn't help it."

"So kind," said Tom. "That's better."

"It's all over now, dear."

"That's better still. Don't cry any more. I can't stand it."

"Now, Mr. Todd," said Aunt Rachel, gaily; "recollect, while you are here, you and George must not have *all* the conversation to yourselves. *You* and I have scarcely had a word together yet. How do you like Malvern?"

"Very much indeed," replied Tom; "it's an out-and-out place. There seems to be nothing at all but trumps in it, and *you* are about the best trump of the lot."

"Do you think so?" said Aunt Rachel, smiling, while Georgiana's neck and face were crimson.

"Think so?" replied Tom; "think so? I know it, because you are kind to George. As to the place itself, it's the most spicy place I ever *did* see. Nothing can be more out-and-out."

"I perfectly agree with you," observed Aunt Rachel, who felt much amused; "it is, indeed, a sweet place. And now, Mr. Todd, we'll have a glass of wine together, shall we?"

"I shall feel most proud," replied Tom: "but it won't be the first time I've drank your good health. The first time I drank it I recollect well: I drank it then in a bottle of stout."

"Tom, my dear!" cried Georgiana.

"As true as I'm alive it's a fact."

"And where were you then?" inquired Aunt Rachel.

"At the inn here, over the way. I'll tell you how it was. I'd ordered a bottle of stout, and just as you was passing, the waiter somehow happened to mention your name. That was the cause of my finding out George. If it hadn't been for that stout, I don't think I ever should have found her here at all. So I've liked bottle stout ever since. Champagne's good, and so's red port wine, but, in my mind, bottled stout beats 'em into fits."

"Then do me the favour to touch the bell," said Aunt Rachel, who laughed outright, while poor Georgiana was in agony. "Sarah," she added, as the servant entered, "tell John to go over to the inn for half a dozen bottles of stout."

"Oh, by no means on my account. Oh, *no*!" cried Tom.

"Dear aunt," said Georgiana; "pray do not."

"Now, I beg that you will not interfere. You have nothing whatever to do with it. Mr. Todd is my guest, not yours."

"My dear," said Georgiana, as the servant left the room. "How *could* you mention it?"

"Well," replied Tom; "I'm sorry I did now."

"Why *should* you be sorry?" observed Aunt Rachel; "I'm *glad* it was mentioned—very glad. I wish, George, you wouldn't interfere with us at all. Mr. Todd and I perfectly understand each other. Do we not, Mr. Todd?"

"I know you're an out-and-out sort," returned Tom; "I *like* you, and no mistake about it."

"I feel, of course, flattered."

"Not a bit of it. There ain't a mite of flattery in that. I *do* like you, and I don't care who knows it. You're a good 'un, every inch of you, as George said you was, and if I could jump through the window to serve you, I'd *do* it with all the pleasure in life. You want to make me happy: I know you do, and you have began it by making me grateful. If I was to leave you this moment, and never set eyes on you again, I should never forget you. George couldn't help crying, you was so kind, and, although I'm not going to cry, I feel it, and deeply, too; and no mistake."

"Mr. Todd," cried Aunt Rachel, who really felt delighted with him, "how many compliments *do* you mean to pay me?"

"My heart's full of 'em," replied Tom; "full: and George's heart's full of 'em too."

"You mean full of gratitude, dear, do you not?" interposed Georgiana.

"That's just what I *do* mean."

"Then say no more about it," observed Aunt Rachel; "I know the feelings you both entertain, and therefore don't say another

word. Well, Sarah," she added, as the servant came in with a basket containing the whole of the stout; "now some glasses and a corkscrew, and then we shall get on."

"Oh, my dear aunt," said Georgiana, "I'm sorry—"

"Did I not beg of you not to *interfere*?" cried Aunt Rachel, smiling. "I request that you will mind what I *say*, Mrs. Todd."

"I'll open it," said Tom, when the servant brought the corkscrew.

"Thank you, sir," said Sarah, who, having placed the glasses on the table, retired.

Tom then opened one of the bottles, and when he had carefully filled a glass, he presented it with grace to Aunt Rachel.

"I hope you'll excuse me," she observed, with a smile; "I really am afraid to touch it."

"Oh, take a sip: now do," said Tom. "You don't know how happy you'll make me."

"Well: I will put my lips to it."

"There's a dear—that is—I beg pardon—you know what I mean—it was on'y a slip, as we say in the classics."

"You funny man!" exclaimed Aunt Rachel, who began to laugh heartily: "George will be jealous if you go on so."

"Jealous!" cried Tom. "There ain't a mite of jealousy about her. I'll bet you what you like that no mortal flesh alive can make her jealous."

"You will never give me cause to be jealous, dear Tom," observed Georgiana, archly.

"If I *do*, you'll tell me, won't you?"

"That she will!" exclaimed Aunt Rachel.

"Then I'll bet ten to one she never does."

"Only ten to one?"

"I'll bet ten thousand to one she never does; and I don't think that'll suit any man's book. You'll have a little drop, my love, won't you?" he added, addressing Georgiana.

"Not any, dear, thank you: I'd rather not."

"Oh, do have a bite. Come—and I'll have this glass to myself. My dear madam, good health to you: George, my love."

"Do you like that as well," said Aunt Rachel, "as that in which you first drank my health at the inn?"

"It's like mother's milk," replied Tom: "I love it."

"Then open another bottle."

Tom did so; and then replenished his glass, and smacked his lips, and enjoyed it highly, while Georgiana, as well as her aunt, were nearly convulsed with laughter.

"Pray do not mind him, dear aunt," said Georgiana, as she and Aunt Rachel retired to one of the windows.

"Mind him, my love!" replied Aunt Rachel. "Why he's one of the funniest men I ever met with."

"He's strange, I know, and awkward, but he has a good heart."

"I know that he has—I know it; and that is sufficient for me. I'd rather, my love, see a man like that, than one of your self-sufficient, superficial fools, who conceive themselves to be oracles. I like him: I like him much. Now don't say another word about it. Well, Mr. Todd," she added, "how are you getting on?"

"Slap!" replied Tom. "Out-and-out. The stout's capital—capital stout: I never tasted better."

"Is he fond of coffee?" inquired Aunt Rachel.

"Very," replied Georgiana.

"Then we'll have it up now. Ring the bell, dear."

Georgiana did so, and coffee was ordered.

"The very thing I love," cried Tom.

"You are fond of coffee, I believe," said Aunt Rachel.

"If there's anything alive I like next to bottle stout, it's coffee, because after that George always goes to the piano."

"How do you like her singing, Mr. Todd?"

"When she sings I always feel just as if I was in heaven—it's so like the singing of one of the angels."

"Which of them, dear?" inquired Georgiana, gaily.

"The loveliest of the lot," replied Tom, "and there's no mistake about it."

Again Aunt Rachel merrily laughed, while Tom enjoyed his bottled stout, and Georgiana, tired of blushing, playfully patted his cheek.

Coffee was produced, and Tom relinquished his stout; and when they had drank about three cups each, he asked Georgiana to sing.

"I cannot, dear," said Georgiana; "indeed I cannot."

"What!" cried Tom. "Tell that to the marines."

"I really feel too much fatigued, dear."

"That's another thing," cried Tom; "that makes a hole in the matter at once. If that's the case, I wouldn't have you do it for the world."

"I do feel fatigued, dear," observed Georgiana; "still I will try to get through a song."

"If you can't without distressing yourself, don't try."

"I think, my love, I shall be able to manage it."

"Well," said Tom, conducting her to the piano, "I can only say, my love, that if you can you'll delight us. She sings out-and-out," he added, turning to Aunt Rachel. "You've heard her, of course?"

"Oh! frequently."

"I'll back her against mortal flesh to sing *one* song."

"And what song is that?"

"'John Anderson my Jo.'"

"Then do sing it, dear: I should so like to hear it."

Georgiana sang it with great effect, and then played a brilliant overture, and then sang another sweet song, and then another: in short, she continued to sing and to play until ten, when her aunt rose and bade them good night.

"My dear," said Georgiana, when her aunt had retired, "how you did go on!"

"I didn't put my foot in it, did I?" said Tom.

"You appeared to amuse my aunt highly."

"Of course. She's an out-and-out good 'un, and nothing but a good 'un. She likes to see people enjoy themselves, and she's just the one to make 'em do it. I thought for the first five minutes I'd better keep my tongue between my teeth; but when I saw her bent upon making us happy, I couldn't help letting it loose."

"Well, she appeared to be highly delighted."

"Oh! it's all right, love. Depend upon that. I know at once when I *can* speak, and when I can't. I knew it was all quite right with her. She's nothing at all but an out-and-out good 'un."

"She is very kind."

"Kind, my love. She's stunning. I couldn't have thought it. As true as I'm alive, I couldn't have believed even *you* if you'd told me she'd been so kind. Why I'd go to the end of the world to serve her?"

"She feels that you would. But be cautious, my dear: pray mind what you say. I would not have you commit yourself here for the world."

"My dearest love, don't be alarmed. Depend upon it, I'll not do that. But you must be fatigued, dear; come, let's go to bed."

Georgiana *was* fatigued, and therefore immediately retired.

In the morning, Aunt Rachel greeted Tom with the most pleasing familiarity—sent to hire a couple of horses for him and Georgiana—had her ponies brought round, and asked him what he thought of them, and when he had frightened her little groom by finding all sorts of faults with his management, she sent for her phaeton, that he might have a look at that.

"Well," said he, when the phaeton had been brought, "the machine's well enough—it's a very fair machine—but there ain't any comfort in it—it ain't a mite fit for *you*! I wish you'd let me put the whole establishment in order? I'd make them there ponies look twenty pound better; and, as for the phaeton, I'd have it what it ought to be—a comfortable out-and-out thing."

"Well," said Aunt Rachel, "I should really feel obliged if you would take the trouble."

"Trouble!" cried Tom; "it'll be a pleasure, and nothing but. Do you think of going for a drive this morning?"

"Why, if you would accompany me and George, I should like it much."

"Then put the ponies in, boy, and don't be a month about it."

Aunt Rachel and Georgiana then went to dress, and Tom followed the boy to the stable, which he had no sooner entered, than he looked round, and cried, "Why, what's all this? Is this a state of mind to keep a stable in? *Look* here: here you are. You're all a mass of muck! *I'll* give you a wrinkle or two by-and-by. But get the harness on. Is this your harness? Is this the way to keep harness, think you? Is it *fit* for a lady to look at? What are you after? Is that the way you put a collar on?"

The boy said nothing: he did his best, and perspired freely: but he really was so dreadfully nervous at the time, that he could scarcely get the harness on at all.

"Oh," resumed Tom, "you and me must have a little conversation together. This sort of thing, you know, won't do at any price. What's your wages?"

"Four pound a year, sir," replied the boy, timidly.

"Four pound a year. Well, it ain't too much; but you ain't what *I* call cheap at that. Here's reins! Do you think they're fit to touch with a pair of tongs? Come, come, make 'em a *little* matters tidy. Is that the way you do it? Send I may live! Here, give us hold. Now, I'll tell you what it is, my little swell: if you attend to me as you ought, I'll make a man of you: I'll learn you how things *should* be done, and how to do 'em, so that, when you get a little matters older, you may be worth *thirty* pound instead of four. There, jump in and take 'em round. What! is that the way you hold the reins? Why don't you take 'em so? Now then. What do you want to turn so sharp for? Ain't there lots of room? You'll have the whole blessed thing over! Take a sweep: that's it: I shall be able to make something of you *now*, if you mind what you are about. Now *then!* do you want to knock the post down? You're a coachman, you are, and no mistake."

The boy never went within a yard of the post before, but it then appeared to be almost impossible for him to avoid it. He did, however, clear it by a quarter of an inch, and then drove round to the gate.

"Which way shall we go?" said Tom, having handed Aunt Rachel and Georgiana in.

"Whichever way you please," replied Aunt Rachel.

"I wish then you'd let me drive you over to Worcester."

"Do so by all means. Let us go to Worcester."

"Will not that be too far, dear aunt?" said Georgiana.

"For me, my love?"

"Yes: will it not be too far?"

"Oh dear no; not at all! I should like it much. I have not

felt so well for a long time. I am, in fact, in great spirits this morning, for which I have to thank Mr. Todd."

"Who's paying compliments *now*?" cried Tom. "I say though, here's a whip! Is this the best you've got about the premises?"

"My dear," cried Georgiana, "I'm *sure* it's a very good one."

"It is a very good one of the sort, but it isn't exactly the *sort* I like. However, it's better than none: *that's* a blessing. Now my little tits," he added, taking the reins, "there's only one thing I've got to say to you at present, that is—I want to see how much you've got in you."

The ponies—apparently understanding what he meant by this—started in style, and—it was a feat which they had never before dreamt of—trotted to Worcester in fifty minutes.

"Now," said Tom, "I must get you to excuse me for a short time. I have a little business to do. Shall we put up at this inn?"

"Oh, yes," said Aunt Rachel.

"Here we are then. You remember this house, George, don't you?"

"Well, dear; quite well," replied Georgiana.

"Now," said Tom, having assisted them to alight, "will you let me recommend you a snack of some sort—something in the shape of a sandwich and a glass of sherry?"

"Well, I think that I could enjoy a sandwich, really," said Aunt Rachel.

"I am quite sure that *I* could," observed Georgiana. "But had we not better wait, dear, till you return?"

"Oh, no, never mind me; I'll have something when I come back."

"Something," said Aunt Rachel; "something that *I* shall order?"

"Anything that *you* order: anything in life."

He then left them, and on his return to the yard, said to the ostler, "Here, jump in, and show me where the best coachmaker in the town lives. Never mind your jacket: jump in."

The ostler did so, and they drove to a coachmaker's shop.

"Now, I'll tell you what I want," said Tom. "I want a spring-back to this seat—just come about half-way across and round the corner."

"I understand what you mean, sir," replied the coachmaker.

"Well, have you got one that you can fix in now at once?"

"I'd rather have the phaeton for a day or two, sir."

"That won't do. Haven't you got one?"

"Why, sir, I have one, but that's in a gig."

"Why can't you let me have that, and make another?"

"Well, sir, I certainly could do that."

"Of course. Where is it?"

"That's the one I mean, sir."

"That'll be the very *thing*! Get your man to fix it in at once. Have you a saddler about here?"

"I'll show you where there's one," said the ostler, "if you'll walk, sir, a step or two this way."

"Very good. I'll be back in ten minutes."

The ostler then took him to the shop of a friend, of whom he purchased a beautiful mat for the phaeton, an elegant whip, a new set of reins, and having paid for them, and given the necessary instructions, returned to see how the coachmaker got on.

The back fitted well; it could not have fitted better, and as the stays had but to be taken from the gig and screwed on to the phaeton, the job was not a long one.

"Now," said Tom, "what's the damage?"

"Well, I don't know, sir," replied the coachmaker, thoughtfully.

"It *ought* to be two pound, but let's say thirty shillings."

"Well! *if* I didn't think thirty shillings enough, I'd give you two pound; but I do. Here you are."

"I'm much obliged," said the coachmaker. "Will you allow me to give you a few of my cards?"

"Oh, yes; let's have them."

The cards were produced, and when Tom had given the man half-a-crown, he drove back with the ostler to the inn.

"Now," said Tom, "take the ponies out, give 'em a feed, and when I'm gone, make them two fellows stand a crown apiece."

"Well, my dear," said Georgiana, as he entered the room, "have you got through *all* your business?"

"Yes," replied Tom; "it's all cooked!"

"Cooked!" said Aunt Rachel, laughing heartily; "you really are a very funny man; but we have had something else cooked during your absence."

"There's a dear," said Tom, as Aunt Rachel rang the bell; "but I hope that you haven't been waiting for *me*?"

"Why, did you suppose that we were so impolite as to have our luncheon before you returned?"

"Well, I didn't suppose much about it. I thought if you were peckish, you'd have it at once; but as you are so very polite, I can't help feeling proud."

Luncheon was then brought in: sandwiches and sherry for the ladies, and a dish of broiled ham, with a bottle of stout, for Tom.

"And did you order this?" said he.

"I did," replied Aunt Rachel.

"Then you've made me more fond of you than ever. Lovely ham, and celestial stout, is fit for a king on his throne."

"For Heaven's sake, dear, don't go on so!" exclaimed Georgiana with a smile.



"Why not, my love? Why not? In my mind, there's nothing so out-and-out as a bottle of stout and broiled ham; and especially as it was ordered because you both knew how I should enjoy it. Ladies, I drink to your very good health; may you live long, and die just as happy as angels."

The ladies laughed, and acknowledged this toast; and when Tom had eaten the whole of the ham, he declared that he *never* relished anything so much.

"Well, my dear," said Georgiana, "had we not better think of returning?"

"As you please, ladies," replied Tom. "I'm quite at your service. I'll just ring the bell for the bill, and then go and see after the tits."

"What a kind, grateful, good-tempered creature he is," said Aunt Rachel, as Tom left the room. "I really admire him more and more."

"I need not say, dear aunt, that I am overjoyed to hear it."

"I really don't know that I ever met with a man so attentive, and yet so amusing. Oh! I like him much! He's a kind, devoted, unassuming creature, whom every woman might love."

"*You* have won his heart," said Georgiana, "at all events! He perceives that your object is to make us happy, and feels more grateful than you can imagine."

"Now, ladies," said Tom, on re-entering the room, after having seen everything arranged to his satisfaction; "*when* you are ready, the ponies are."

The ladies rose, and left the room with him, and when he had handed them into the phaeton, he got in himself, and dashed out of the yard.

"Mr. Todd," said Aunt Rachel, "now I really *do* appreciate this. I sit as comfortable now as if I were in an easy chair. And what an elegant rug! This is the business you had to transact, then. Well, you are very, very kind and considerate. This is indeed delightful."

"Dear me, what a beautiful whip!" cried Georgiana.

"Do you like it?" said Tom.

"Oh! it's a dear."

"You'll see I shan't want to touch the tits at all with this. *They* know when there's a good whip behind 'em."

"But," observed Aunt Rachel, "these are not our reins?"

"They are not the reins we came out with. These are fit to be handled—they were not: these are sound, but they were rotten."

"Well, I'm really much pleased, Mr. Todd. You cannot imagine, George, what a nice comfortable seat this is."

Georgiana was delighted, and so was her aunt; while Tom felt proudly conscious of the fact: and thus they returned to Malvern.

## CHAPTER X.

## TOM AND GEORGIANA LEAVE MALVERN.

To Aunt Rachel Tom's presence was a source of great pleasure. He was, indeed, so attentive, so devoted, so grateful, and studied so diligently to delight her, that when the week for which he had been invited had expired, she utterly repudiated the idea of his leaving.

"You must stop a month at least!" she exclaimed, when at the suggestion of Georgiana he hinted that the time for their departure had arrived. "The fact is, I positively cannot yet spare you."

"Well, but you know," replied Tom, "I'm so afraid, you know, of putting you out of the way."

"Now don't be at all afraid of that. Believe me, when I say that I am delighted with your society."

"And so am I with yours! There's no mistake at all about that!—not a dust! But then, you know, I don't a mite like to be any annoyance, you know, or anything of *that*!"

"Will you oblige me by holding your tongue, Mr. Todd," said Aunt Rachel, with a smile. "Do you imagine that, if I thought that you would annoy me, I should press you so earnestly to stop?"

"Well, then, will you promise this—that when you want us gone, you'll tell us to go?"

"I will."

"Very well, then: *that's* settled. I shall make no more bother about that. And now I wish you'd let me cook a few more alterations in that there stable establishment of yours, will you?"

"I so much approve of those which you have already made, that I'll give you a *carte blanche* to do just what you please."

"Oh! I don't want a cart! The barrow will do!"

"I meant to say," returned Aunt Rachel, smiling, "that you are at perfect liberty to do as you think proper."

"Very well. Then I'll go to work at once. But I say though, I wish you'd transmogrify your little swell into a groom?"

"Is he not a groom now?"

"Why, he don't look much *like* one."

"Then make him look like one, by all means."

"I will."

He then proceeded to the stable, and as he entered exclaimed, "Well, my Lilliprusian! How's the tits? Tidy?"

"Yes, sir," replied the boy.

"That's right. You've done what I told you to do, I see."

"Yes, sir."

"Very good. I shall make a man on you now, before I've done with you."

"Thank you, sir."

"Thank me! You'll have reason to thank me as long as you live. You'll bless the very day you first set eyes upon me. I like the lad which minds what's said, and does his best to do what he's told. Now just look you here: your togs ain't the thing. You must look a little matters more populor and spicy. You ain't a page: you're a groom, and must look like a groom. Now me and Mrs. Todd's going over to Worcester: mount one of them tits, and come with us, and then I'll have you measured slap and regular."

"Shall I go then and order the horses, sir?"

"Yes; and tell 'em not to be above a fortnight a bringing 'em."

"I will, sir," replied the "Lilliprusian," who looked upon Tom as an oracle—one who would eventually render him fit to take the place of an earl's groom. "I'll wait and see 'em bring 'em round myself."

"That'll be the ticket," said Tom. "Look alive."

The boy started off with alacrity; and Tom, on his return to the drawing-room, found Georgiana in tears.

"George, my love!" he exclaimed, "what's the row? Is there anything broke? What's amiss?"

"Nothing, dear, nothing," replied Georgiana.

"Nothing! You don't mean to swindle me into the belief that you'd cry away in this ere state of mind for nothing."

"The fact is," observed Aunt Rachel, "I merely told her that I couldn't think of parting with either of you until you had been with me a month, when she instantly burst into tears."

"What for?" cried Tom—"what for?"

"I merely thought," replied Georgiana, "that if dear papa were as kind, how happy, how perfectly happy we should be."

"Well, but look here," said Tom; "how do you know he won't be? That's the point!—How do you know he won't be?—How do you know he'll hold out?—How do you know he won't come round?—How do you know any individual thing about it?"

"Oh! I fear he'll never forgive me."

"Shall I go over and ask him?"

"Not for the world, dear! No! Good Heavens! I'm perfectly sure he'd assault you."

"I ain't very much afraid of that," said Tom. "However, he's safe to come round by-and-by. I haven't the dust of a doubt about that. Depend upon it he'll not hold out long."

"That's what I say," interposed Aunt Rachel.

"Of course!" cried Tom. "I'll bet ten to one he don't, twenty times over. Come, come, dry your eyes, come! I'll tell you what it is, if you don't, I won't give you a single kiss for the next twenty

minutes! There, there—that's right—there. Let's do to-day's jobs to-day, and leave to-morrow's jobs till to-morrow. The time'll come when it'll be wise to make a move. Let's wait until the time does come. That's my sentiments. It ain't a mite of use fretting now. It'll be time enough to fret and stew when we know the worst; but that'll be all right and straight by-and-by. I have no more doubt about it, George, than I have about your being beautiful and good. But here are the horses—come, put on your hat. I wish you'd go with us," he added, turning to Aunt Rachel. "I'll drive the tits, if you will."

"What, and let Georgiana ride alone?"

"We can cock the Lilliprusian upon my horse."

"Oh! I couldn't think of that."

"Well, then, let the Lilly drive you. Come, go, there's a dear. You don't know how happy you'll make me if you will. I can't bear to leave you moping at home. Say you'll go?"

"Well, I will."

"There's a darling. Put on your traps, and I'll go and see after the tits."

The ladies were no sooner ready, than the phaeton was at the gate; and when Tom, with the utmost care, had handed Aunt Rachel in, he assisted Georgiana to mount, and they started.

"I say," he observed to Georgiana, on the road, "how about Polly? Hadn't you better write and let her know that we shan't be in town for three weeks, at least?"

"Yes, dear," replied Georgiana, "I'll do so. My aunt would have her down; but as I have treated her more as a companion than as a servant, she would not, I apprehend, feel comfortable here."

"I understand. No more she would. You're quite right, quite. She'd better remain where she is."

"She has a sister in town, whom, of course, she can visit as often as she pleases. But I'll write to her this evening."

"Do; and tell her to send word how she's getting on, for I should like her to be a *little* matters comfortable, you know, because she ain't a bad sort."

On their arrival at Worcester, after a most delightful ride, they put up at their favourite inn, and when Tom had assisted Aunt Rachel into a room, he took the "Lilliprusian" to a tailor.

"You see this here little swell, don't you?" said he.

The tailor looked down with the view of making the discovery, and then intimated that he really *was* to the naked eye visible.

"Well, then," resumed Tom, "I want you to turn him out tidy."

"Certainly, sir," replied the tailor. "What style of dress would you like him to have?"

"A blue frock coat, a primrose waistcoat, and a spicy pair of doo-skin smalls."

"Very good, sir. I'll do the best I can."

"They must be made popular, and well, you know."

"They *shall* be made well, sir: depend upon that."

"Very good: then take the little varment's measure."

The tailor did so, minutely; and when he had promised to send them home as soon as possible, Tom left him, and entered a boot-maker's shop.

"Can you make a spicy pair of top boots for this here little wretch?" he inquired.

"Ill try, sir," replied the bootmaker; "but he's mortal small for tops."

"I must have 'em made regular, you know, and popular."

"If I make 'em at all, they shall be a pair of pictures, sir; but I'm not sure I can."

"Not sure! Why when I was but a *four* year, I'd a pair of tops!"

"They must have been mites, sir. However, I'll do 'em. I know that if I can't, there ain't a man in Worcester that can. I'll undertake 'em, and they shall be beauties."

"Very well, then, measure him. I don't at all wish to confine you to price: anything popularly rational I'll pay."

The measure was accordingly taken, and when Tom had ordered a hat for the mite—of the shape which, at that particular period of the world's history, was styled a Petersham—he in the strictest possible confidence said to him, "Now, if you drop a single word about these here new togs to any flesh before you get 'em, I'll welt you. And now," he added, on reaching the inn, "get a bottle of ginger beer and a biscuit, and be jovial."

He then rejoined the ladies, and found that they had ordered his favourite dish of broiled chicken and ham, with, of course, a "celestial" bottle of stout; and when he had freely partaken thereof, the party returned to Malvern.

On the following Friday the clothes came home, with the hat, the boots, and a pair of spurs, and Tom immediately ordered the "little Lilliprusian" to follow him into his dressing-room.

"Now," he said "peel; and let's see what you look like. Take every blessed thing off, but the shirt, and then put on this spicy apparel."

The boy with avidity stripped, and put on his new clothes, which fitted admirably, and of which he was, beyond expression, proud.

"That'll do!" cried Tom. "That'll do!—that'll do! An out-and-out fit and no mistake: nothing can fit more popular. Now, just cock your tile on. There you are! How do you like the look of yourself now?—eh?"

"Nice, sir," replied the boy.

"Nice! I believe you. Now, just let me give you a friendly caution: Recollect, if I *ever* see these here things dirty, I'll tan you."

"I'll keep them like wax, sir."

"You'd better. And now just come down along o' me. There, leave that there glass. You'll do. Do you *hear*?"

The boy sprang round on the instant and followed; but the moment he entered the drawing-room with Tom, Georgiana and her aunt burst into a fit of laughter.

"What are you laughing at?" cried Tom. "At the Lilly's new shell? Ain't it spicy? Don't you like it? Now, sir, he added, addressing the Lilly, "just walk up and down the room populor."

The boy obeyed, and strutted in style, while Georgiana and her aunt were in absolute convulsions.

"Well," resumed Tom, "how do you like the turn out? *Tell* us what you think of it! Ain't it a populor shell altogether?"

"Tom! Tom!" exclaimed Georgiana. "Good gracious, my dear, how ridiculous you are."

"What about?" cried Tom. "That'll do," he added, turning to the boy, who still kept on strutting and glancing at his boots. "Take off your tile again now, and wait for orders."

"For Heaven's *sake*," cried Georgiana, "let the boy leave the room."

"Leave the room, boy," said Tom, "and mount one of the tits, and ride up and down the road. Mind the saddle ain't dusty! You know what I told you!"

The boy bowed and proudly withdrew; and then ran down-stairs to show himself to cook, who instantly burst into a roar.

"How could you," exclaimed Georgiana—when the boy had left the room—"how could you, dear, make the poor child such a figure?"

"A figure!" cried Tom.

"He's a perfect little fright! I speak of his dress. I never saw anything half so ridiculous."

"You never saw anything half so ridiculous! What is there ridiculous about it? He's a groom. Very well. That's the dress of a groom. I never saw a groom dressed in any other way! A frock-coat, smalls, and top boots. What *can* be more populor?"

"I like the appearance of a man in that dress; but he is a mere child!"

"A child fourteen year old! He's but a mite certainly!—a regular little living Lilliprusian—but that makes him look the more spicy! That's it. See him mounted; and then it very forcibly strikes me you'll alter your opinion. Don't you think she will?" he added, addressing Aunt Rachel, whose laughter had scarcely subsided. "Now *don't* you think she'll draw in her horns when she sees him mounted regulor and populor?"

"Doubtless," replied Aunt Rachel, "he'll look better then."

"Of course! It ain't a drawing-room dress! It's made for what it is!"

"But *isn't* he a fright, aunt?" urged Georgiana. "*Doesn't* he look like a little old man?"

"I wish, dear," replied Aunt Rachel, "I do wish you wouldn't interfere. The dress will do extremely well. It has been made very neatly, and is, moreover, highly characteristic."

"There you are! Now then!" cried Tom in tones of triumph, as the mite rode past. "What think you now! That's tidy; ain't it? Did you ever see anything in this blessed world more regular or popular than that? Ain't it out-and-out? Look at him. There's a little swell!"

"Well, he *does* look a nice little fellow at this distance, I really must confess," said Georgiana.

"Of course he does! Didn't I tell you he would? When you saw him here you thought him ridiculous, because you saw a fish out of water; but do you see anything ridiculous now?"

"No, dear: indeed I do not."

"For my part," observed Aunt Rachel, "I like his appearance much!"

"You do?" cried Tom.

"Oh, *yes*! I admire it!"

"Then I'm happy. I don't know how it is, but you always do praise whatever *I* do! I don't mean to mean that I believe you know that you ever tell a fib—not a bit of it!—but I *have* sometimes thought you are such a kind soul that you say things in order to make me happy. Here you are again!" he added. "Now, George—now! Doesn't he look out-and-out?"

"He does look well, dear: very well, indeed."

"I'll back him against the groom of any nob in nature!"

Georgiana looked, and Tom corrected himself. "I mean," said he, "any nobleman in nature. Noblemen's all called nobs at New-market."

"Oh; I perfectly understand," observed Aunt Rachael, smiling. "*Nob* are the first three letters of the word nobleman; and, therefore, *nob* is but an abbreviation."

"Well, I never thought of that," replied Tom; "but I can't help thinking of this, that if any flesh can get a fellow out of a scrape—why it's you! You don't exactly know how much I love you for that! However, I'm glad you like the look of the Lilly; and now I'll go and give him a few small hints."

Tom then left the room, and from that time until the prescribed month had expired, they continued to live in the most perfect harmony, for while Tom's efforts to delight Georgiana and her aunt were unwearied, they studied to render him happy by all the means at their command.

It is true that during the interim Georgiana shed many bitter tears; but those tears were shed—not in the presence of Tom—but while she was privately conversing with her aunt, who, albeit she felt that she had been unjustly treated by the general—knowing well that the suspicions he had inspired were baseless—never breathed a syllable before Georgiana, which could tend to diminish her affection for her father, but invariably sought to strengthen that affection with the hope that *her* amiability, and Tom's good conduct, would eventually effect a reconciliation.

At length the morning came on which Tom and Georgiana were to leave; and Aunt Rachel was in consequence sad, notwithstanding she had made them promise to revisit Malvern soon. During breakfast not a smile was seen to light up her features; and when the chaise which was to convey them to Worcester arrived, her sadness exhibited itself in tears.

"God bless you!—God bless you!" she exclaimed, after having taken a private farewell of Georgiana, whom she had loaded with presents. "God bless you both."

"And God bless you," cried Tom with emotion. "I shall never forget you as long as I've breath; for your kindness has been of the most out-and-out sort that ever yet created gratitude in flesh. There's only one favour I've got now to ask; and that is, that you'll let me call you 'dear aunt,' as well as Georgiana."

Aunt Rachel pressed his hand, and he kissed her.

"And now," she observed, "I have a favour to ask of *you*."

"You have!" cried Tom. "*What* is it? Only just let us know what it is."

"It is," she replied, "that you will not open *this* note before you reach Worcester."

"Is that all?" cried Tom, as he looked at the seal. "*I* was in hopes it was something difficult! Haven't you no other favour to ask?"

"Yes," she replied, with a look of intensity; "*one*. Be kind, Thomas—*be* kind to George! But I know you will," she added promptly, as Tom was about to reply. "I'm sure of it."

"And I, dear aunt," cried Georgiana, "feel sure of it, too."

"Heaven be with you!" exclaimed Aunt Rachel. "May happiness be for ever yours." And when Georgiana had once more embraced her, they parted in silence and in tears.

"I couldn't have stood it above another couple of minutes," said Tom, as they drove from the gate. "She's a trump, every inch of her! Stunning kind—and as the general belongs to the self-same stock, I've no fear of his coming round right. But don't cry no more, my love—don't cry no more. I know your feelings, and I know mine; but instead of shedding tears about the business, we ought to be fit to jump over the moon."



"My tears, dear Tom, are tears of joy."

"I know they are, and I *could* shed 'em too; but I won't—I won't lose 'em, I'll bottle 'em up, and enjoy their flavour for everlasting. But I say, George—I say—it's a rum dodge about this note, ain't it? It's something like writing a valentine, and being your own postman. I suppose it's a regular out-and-out lecture."

"If it be, dear," observed Georgiana, "I am quite sure that it is a kind one."

"Oh, safe: she ain't got a single mite of anything else in her. But I say, what a rum go though, ain't it? Not to be opened until we reach Worcester. What a fashion these envelopes is. You can't get a peep at the sides, you see, no how. I wonder what she says. I'm half afraid it's something she didn't like to tell me. I wish we was there. Come, cut away!" he added, calling out to the postboy "Don't be a fortnight a doing eight miles."

"What's the genelum say?" cried the postboy, addressing the mite, whom Aunt Rachel had sent to see them safely to Worcester.

"Cut away!" shrieked the mite, with an air of authority. "Don't be a fortnight a doin' eight miles."

"Well, I don' know," growled the postboy, "we're doin' a good ten mile an hour."

"Don't be impatient, dear Tom," said Georgiana. "We shall very soon be there."

"Oh, I'm not *impatient*!" cried Tom. "I'm only anxious to see what she says, that's all. I ain't a mite impatient—not to say *impatient*! Now what do you *think* she says now, yourself?"

"I can't imagine. She told me that she had a note for you; but she told me nothing more."

"But guess, you know. I wish you would—just give a guess."

"I really cannot guess. I can't conceive what she has written."

"Well, I think you know it's a bit of a sort of a kind of a loving blow up, you know. That's what I think."

"You are mistaken, dear; depend upon it you are mistaken."

"Well, I only wish I may be; but that's what I *think*. Because, if she had anything pleasant to say, why didn't she say it point blank, instead of writing this note, you know? That's what I look at—that's the thing as gets over me. If I had anything to say that I didn't like to say, I should write a note to him which I wanted to say it to; but if I'd anything pleasant to say, which I didn't mind saying, I'd say it at once."

"Depend upon this, dear Tom," said Georgiana, "there is nothing in that note which will give you the slightest pain."

"Well, I only wish there mayn't be, that's all; but what 'll you bet of it? Come now, what 'll you bet? I'll tell you what I'll do with you: I'll bet you a black satin dress against a spicy frock-coat. now what do you say?"

"I *have* a black satin dress ; my aunt made me a present of one this morning, with oh ! such a quantity of elegant things ! There are five or six dresses, and three or four shawls, and capes and scarfs, and oh ! I really cannot tell what besides. But Tom, dear !" she added, archly—"Tom ! dear me, do you not notice ? Did you ever in your life see so beautiful a watch ?"

"What ! and did she give you that, too ?"

"Yes, dear, and these rings. Are they not loves ?"

"She's a trump !" cried Tom—"a stunning trump !"

"Did you ever see such a dear of a watch ?"

"It's a rattler," replied Tom. "I never see nothing more popular and spicy ; and the chain, too ! Send I may *live*, there's a chain ! That's a fifty guinea touch at least, that is !"

"Isn't she a dear, kind soul ?"

"Kind ! There, don't say another word about it. She stuns me wholly—popularly *stuns* me."

"You remember that yesterday morning, dear, she came over to Worcester alone ?"

"Yes, my love—yes."

"Well, these things—the whole of them—were, doubtless, purchased then."

"I shouldn't wonder. She's a good 'un, and nothing but a good 'un. I'll knock down any man alive which says she isn't."

Tom then examined the watch minutely, and on opening the case, found the following inscription :—

PRESENTED  
BY  
RACHEL BROOKE,  
TO HER BELOVED NIECE  
GEORGIANA TODD,  
AS A TOKEN  
OF  
AFFECTION.

"Do you see this ?" said Tom. "Here you are. Here, just read this. Isn't it popularly stunning ?"

"Bless her !" cried Georgiana. "Bless her !"

They now came within sight of Worcester, and Tom again drew forth the note.

"Where does Worcester commence ?" he inquired.

"We are very near the boundary now, dear," replied Georgiana.

"Well, now we are in it ?" said he in a moment afterwards.

"Not quite : not quite."

"Well, are we in it now ?"

"Yes ; now we are in Worcester," replied Georgiana ; and Tom

in an instant broke the seal, and drew forth a note, with a cheque for 500*l*.

"What!" he exclaimed. "Why, George! What! What, a cheque for five hundred pound! Oh! send *I* may *live*: look here."

Georgiana read the note—in which her aunt, with the utmost delicacy, begged his acceptance of the cheque—and having done so, observed that she was not at all astonished.

"Not astonished!" cried Tom. "Why, it doubles me popularly up! Not astonished!"

"I really cannot say that I am, dear."

"But send *I* may live though! Five hundred pound! I don't know what to *do* with myself? Could *anything* be more popular?"

"The *popularity* of the present, dear Tom," said Georgiana, with a smile, "is indisputable."

"*I believe* you!" cried Tom. "I have a good mind to hire a horse, and ride back to thank her!"

"That will be unnecessary, dear," said Georgiana. "We can thank her with much more effect when we write. But here we are," she added, as they entered the inn yard. "I'll send a note back by the lad."

"*Well*," said Tom, "it gets over *me*; and that's about the bottom of the business. If ever a fellow was popularly flabbergasted—mind you, *I'm* the man, and no mistake."

They then alighted, and were warmly received by Jones, whom Tom had engaged to dine with them that day; and when they had been conducted into the room, which they had frequently occupied before, Georgiana sat down to write to her aunt.

"Don't hurry yourself, dear," said Tom. "He'll not go back yet, I dare say: but I'll see."

He then inquired of the postboy, and—having ascertained that he had been ordered back immediately—returned to Georgiana, who had in the interim been joined by Mrs. Jones.

The note was accordingly written at once, and Tom had the "*Lilliprusian*" in.

"Now," said he, "give this here note to your missis, and don't make it dirty; and mind if I hear, when I come down again, that you haven't paid proper attention, I'll give you a jovial good welting—mind that! Here's a sovereign for you. Save it up."

The mite looked at Tom, and then burst into tears.

"What now?" cried Tom. "What do you mean? What are you crying for?—eh?"

"I can't help it, sir," sobbed the lad, "because I don't like you should go."

"Why, you soft-hearted popular young scamp, be off! Make

your best bow, sir, and cut it! Mind what you're about; and I'll make a man of you! D'ye hear? Now abscond."

The mite bowed and withdrew; and Tom, having ordered dinner, decided on not leaving Worcester that day.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE INTRODUCTION OF MILDMAY.

On their arrival in London, Tom's first object was to go and have a look at his horse, while that of Georgiana was to ascertain how Mary had, during their absence, passed her time.

"You have not been uncomfortable, I hope," she observed.

"Oh!" exclaimed Mary, "I've been most delightful. I never was so happy in all my born days. Oh! I've got such a sweetheart—oh! such a dear."

"Indeed! Why, where did you meet with him, Mary?"

"I'll tell you. You know you gave me leave to go out with my sister. Well, I went with her one day as far as Gravesend. I put on that bonnet you was kind enough to give me, and that puce silk dress that you said I might wear, and I looked *so* nice—oh! you can't think how nice I did look. Well, when we got there, we met a gentleman promiscuous—such a nice gentleman—ay, and quite a gentleman too; and he got into conversation with us, and walked with us, and took us into the gardens, and talked to us, and treated us, and was so kind—oh! you can't think how very kind he was: not one of your impudent, high-flown gentlemen, who come up as if they'd a right to come up and talk a lot of rubbishing nonsense. No; every word he uttered meant something, and every word proved him to be a real gentleman. Oh, how delighted I was to hear him talk. I could have listened to him for ever, what he said was so nice and so delightful. Well, when it was time to come home, he walked with us down to the steam-boat, and took us on board, and then took us into the cabin, and ordered a beautiful tea; and I *never* in the whole course of my life enjoyed a tea so much as I did that. Well, after tea he took us on deck, and pointed out and explained to us everything we passed, and gave us a whole history of everything we saw: and then he spoke to me privately, and said that he hoped to have the pleasure of seeing me frequently, and asked me where I lived, and I told him; and then he directly gave me his card, and asked if I should have any objection to his calling, and I told him that my friends—for I called you my friends, as you have been my friends, and as I am sure you will still be friends

to me. I told him that my friends were out of town, and that until they returned and I had spoken to them about it, I shouldn't like him to come; and he then said that under those circumstances he wouldn't at present on any account call; and then he hoped that I would promise to meet him in the park; and I did, and I've met him since several times, and have found him the same good, kind, clever creature. Oh! he's a dear!"

"What is his name, Mary?"

"Mr. William Mildmay. Here is his card," she added, drawing it from her bosom.

"Mr. William Mildmay. Yes! And what is he?"

"A gentleman that writes, ma'am; an author."

"An author! indeed!"

"I've got one of his books, which I've read and read over and over again. It is such a love of a book, you can't think. You'll be delighted with it, I'm sure you will; nobody can be off being delighted."

"Well, I must read it, Mary."

"Only begin it, only just begin: you'll never leave off till you get to the end."

"Well, from what you have said, I am bound to infer that his intentions are strictly honourable, Mary, and that he has no wish to trifle with your feelings."

"Be quite sure of that, ma'am; oh, quite sure. He has nothing but honour in him. And as for trifling with my feelings, I know he'd rather die than do it."

"He certainly appears to have acted hitherto in a perfectly candid, straightforward manner."

"He couldn't act otherwise if he was to try."

"Well, do you wish me to mention the matter to Mr. Todd?"

"I wish you would, ma'am, if you please. I know Mr. Todd would like him; I'm quite sure he'd like him; he can't be off liking him; no one alive, ma'am, can help liking him."

"Well, I'll name the subject to him. But here he is. Tom, dear," she added, as he entered the room, "it appears that during our absence Mary has made a conquest."

"Made a how much?" cried Tom.

"A conquest, dear! that is to say, she has gained a suitor."

"A suitor; what's that?"

"A sweetheart, dear."

"Oh!" cried Tom, "I understand. But, I say though, Polly; send I may live. You mustn't make a fool of yourself, you know, Polly. Who is he?"

"He is," returned Mary, "a gentleman, who—"

"What," cried Tom. "A gentleman! Worse luck. Mind what you're after, Polly, mind what you're after. Take my advice, you

know, and mind what you're after. Gentlemen is rum swells to deal with. They never falls in love with girls, Polly, without meaning 'em mischief."

"I'm quite sure," said Mary, "that he means me none."

"What! Do you know what you're talking about, Polly? A gentleman, and not mean mischief! I'll defy mortal flesh to produce one as doesn't. I know more about 'em than you do, Polly. I know what they are: I know what they're made of: I know what they're always eternally up to. There ain't a nob in nature which doesn't mean mischief to every blessed pretty modest girl he can get hold of."

"But Tom, dear," observed Georgiana, "you do not understand. This gentleman is not exactly what you would term a nob; he is an author."

"A popular author," interposed Mary.

"Populor! Oh!" cried Tom. "If he's populor, that of course alters the case! Any man that's populor is of course populor, and him which is populor must be out-and-out. That makes all the odds. Oh, that's a very different end of the stick. But I say, Polly, where did you pick him up, eh?"

"I met him at Gravesend."

"Well, and did he come any of his nonsense?"

"No, sir, no," replied Mary; "he hasn't got no nonsense in him."

"Indeed! Why, then he's a wonder," said Tom. "He's what I call a wonder. But who is he—what's his name?"

"Here is his card, sir."

"What's this? Mr. William Mildmay—Mildmay. Well, the name ain't so dusty. Mildmay. I rather like the look of the name. But I say, Polly, what sort of a fellow is he, eh?"

"A nice, quiet, clever, handsome, elegant, gentlemanly man."

"Very good," cried Tom; "*very* good. And is he very fond of you?"

"Yes, sir, yes: I am sure that he is."

"And you are very fond of him, of course?"

"I am."

"Well, then, look you here, Polly: just look you here. You are now under our protection, and we don't mean to let you make a fool of yourself; if you do, you know, it won't be with our consent, so you won't have, you know, to blame us. But, now, just look you here, I must see this swell. You know, I suppose, where he lives?"

"I do."

"Well, then, write to him, and tell him to come and take pot-luck with us to-morrow—that is to say, George, if you have no objection?"

"Oh, I have none whatever, dear," replied Georgiana.

"Well, then, write to him, and ask him to dine with us to-morrow. If he means right, he'll come; if he don't, he won't: so that'll about settle it as far as it goes. If he does come, of course we shall see what he's made of, and if I *should* find him regular and popular, you shan't want a friend, Polly; take your oath of that."

"I'm *very* much obliged to you," said Mary; "indeed, sir, I'm *very* much obliged to you for giving me leave to invite him. I know you'll be delighted; I know you will. But *will* you be kind enough not to mention that I was the *servant* of Mrs. Brooke?"

"What, Polly, what?" cried Tom; "I'll have no deccit. I set my face against it, at once. No, Polly, *no*! If he loves you, he loves you, and there's an end of it; if he don't, he don't, and there's an end of it: but I'll not swindle him into the belief that you are what you are not. I love you, Polly, because I believe you to be a good girl; and Georgiana—I mean Mrs. Todd—loves you, too, because she's just of the same opinion; but neither her nor me will do that which will not only bring us both into contempt, but may make you unhappy for life. No, Polly, let's be all right, and aboveboard. You are the companion of Mrs. Todd, but you were the servant of Mrs. Todd's aunt. Don't let's have any deception. You'll regret it, if you have it, but we won't *do* it. We'll do all we can in a fair way, you know, but in a matter of this description we won't deceive any man alive."

"I'm sure I don't want to deceive him," said Mary; "only I thought as he was such a gentleman, he wouldn't like to know that I'd been a mere servant."

"Leave that to me, Polly: I'll cook that for you. Ask him to come and take pot-luck with us. When we see what he is, we shall know how to act."

Mary again thanked him, and when she had retired to write the note to Mildmay, Georgiana said, "Really, this is a very strange affair, dear. I have heard that men of genius are very eccentric—that, in their efforts to acquire a perfect knowledge of human character, they are prone to do things from which common men shrink—and, although I don't know, of course, that this Mr. Mildmay is what may be termed a man of genius, I really should infer that he is, from the fact of his having become enamoured of Mary."

"Why so?" inquired Tom.

"Why, he must see," replied Georgiana, "that she is anything but an accomplished girl—that she has had a very, *very* small amount of education—that she has been altogether unaccustomed to good society; and that, in short, she cannot speak three consecutive sentences grammatically."

"What!" cried Tom, "is that *you*, George? Why, when did Love have anything at all to do with grammar? When did Love

care a single button about it? Did you love me for my grammar, or in spite of it?"

"Nay, dear, you misapprehend me. All I meant to convey to you was this, that if this Mr. Mildmay be so highly intellectual, as I imagine him to be, I thought it strange that he should seek an alliance with one who is *not* highly intellectual: that's all."

"But ain't it a very old saying, and a true 'un, that extremes often meet? Don't I know a little Lilliprusian jockey at Newmarket, which has a wife five times as big as himself, and which *could* have a couple of shirts made well out of one of the sleeves of her gown? Don't I know, too, a small man of eight-and-twenty stone, and about six foot four, which has got a little mite of a woman for a wife, which can hardly, on tiptoe, hook on to his arm? And don't I know, Georgy, eh? *don't* I know a certain beautiful and highly-accomplished young lady, which fell over head and ears in love with a man which never learnt grammar in his life, until she learnt him? And haven't you," he added, as Georgiana blushed, "said, five hundred times, that 'Love levels all distinctions'?"

"Yes, dear, yes; what you say is quite correct: still we cannot help observing, when a case of this kind occurs, that it is an *extraordinary* case."

"There I agree with you: oh, I quite agree with you there. But after all, Polly'll make a decent wife, and what she don't know, you know, why, he can learn her."

"You meant, dear, to say he can *teach* her, did you not?"

"Teach her? Teach her? Ain't that what I did say?"

"I *understood* you to say he can *learn* her."

"Oh, did I? Well, I meant teach: it's all the same in the long run. But, I say, though, I wonder what sort of a swell he is."

"Why, according to Mary's description—"

"That's nothing. Love always lends all the brushes and colours, when girls paint the lovers they love. They're safe to be out-and-out. I never heard of one from a girl's lips which wasn't."

"Well, we may, perhaps, be able to judge from his writings. Mary *has* one of his works."

"She has. That'll *do* then. *That'll* give us a pretty good notion of what he is. I say, Polly," he added, on opening the door, "let's just have a dig into that there book, will you?"

Mary gave him the book—*emphatically the book*—the only book she conceived it to be possible for him to mean: and that, of course, was the right one.

"Now then," said Tom, "let's see what he's made on. Here you are: here's his name—William Mildmay. Very good. Now will you read out, George?"

"Yes, dear, if you wish it."



"Well do, there's a love. I don't make much of a fist of reading out myself. Here you are. But stop a minute. There, now."

Georgiana commenced, and the first chapter made but little impression upon Tom; but a scene in the second was so humorously described, that as she read it he burst into a roar.

"Capital! Send I may live!" he exclaimed. "What a rum 'un this fellow must be. But go on," he added; "don't stop—go on."

And Georgiana read the next chapter, which threw them both into convulsions.

With feelings of pride Mary heard them laughing, and entered the room as Tom rose from the sofa convulsively holding his sides.

"Oh!" he exclaimed; "oh! ha, ha, ha, ha! Oh!—I shall go into *fits*—ha, ha, ha! Stop, stop! Ha, ha, ha! ho, ho, ho! ha, ha, ha! I shall burst every blessed rib—ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Presently, however, they came to a scene described in a strain of true pathos, and as Georgiana read in the most touching tones, Tom went to the window and wept like a child; but even while he wept—while the tears were still streaming from his eyes—a comic scene which immediately followed set him off again, and thus he continued to laugh and weep alternately, until, to his astonishment, dinner was announced.

"Thunder and lightning!" he exclaimed, as Georgiana closed the book, "what an out-and-out spicy 'un he is! Why, when he comes he'll make us die o' laughing!—he'll burst every blessed blood vessel we have! He's a snorter!—a regular out-and-out snorter! What capital company he must be!"

"He must, indeed, be a most humorous creature," observed Georgiana; who had enjoyed the scenes described quite as much as Tom had, although her mirth, of course, had not been so boisterous. "I'm sure that I shall like him—I'm quite sure of that."

"Like him? I should think so! Who can be off? I *expect* that when he comes he'll throw us both into fits!"

They then went down to dinner, during which the only person spoken of was Mildmay, and so anxious were they to proceed with the tale, that the cloth was scarcely cleared before the book was again in the hands of Georgiana, who read, and with Tom laughed and wept until midnight, when she arrived at the end, without having exhibited even the slightest symptom of exhaustion.

In the morning, however, she was painfully hoarse: indeed, so hoarse that she could scarcely speak at all; and notwithstanding the usual restoratives were applied, when Mildmay came at the appointed time she was almost unable to whisper.

This, Mary had been instructed to explain to him at once; but Tom, having shaken hands cordially with him, said, "The fact is, you know Mrs. Todd read that rum book of yours last night, and you

see she went in such a burster, that what with reading and what with laughing, she ain't got a mite of voice left."

Mildmay looked at Tom with an ill-concealed expression of amazement, and Georgiana, blushing deeply, added, as well as she could, "I really found it impossible to close the book until I had arrived at the conclusion."

"Upon my honour," said Mildmay, "you pay me a very high compliment."

"Oh, not at all!" cried Tom; "not at all! But I say, what a snorter you must be to write such an out-and-out book as that!"

Mildmay, with his characteristic calmness smiled, and addressed a few somewhat more refined observations to Georgiana, whom he found at once to be amiable, intellectual, and elegant, and whose first object was to inspire him with the conviction that although Tom's manners were *rather* rough he possessed a most excellent heart.

"I say, Polly," whispered Tom, while Georgiana and Mildmay were conversing, "I say, he doesn't look as if he'd half the devil in him I expected!"

"I didn't say he had any devil at all in him!" returned Mary; "not a mite."

"No; but I thought from his book that he had. Instead of which he looks within half an inch of being a trifle too modest to live!"

"Wait till you hear him talk, that's all. But isn't he a gentlemanly-looking man? Now isn't he? And hasn't he beautiful eyes? And then his head—did you notice what a fine head he has?"

"It's a rum head—I don't like his head, it's about half a mile wide in front. But he'll do. I say," he added, turning to Mildmay, "what's your opinion of the weather? Don't you think we ain't far off of thunder and lightning?"

"Well, I really don't know," returned Mildmay; "we *may* have both shortly."

"That's just what I think. But I say now, do you know I shouldn't have taken you for the writer of that stunning work!"

"Perhaps not. Authors seldom bear a striking resemblance to the imaginary portraits their readers paint."

"No, I suppose not. They seldom come up to the mark. That's about the bottom of it, ain't it?"

"Exactly," replied Mildmay smiling; and Georgiana looked at Tom with very great significance.

Dinner was then announced, and Mildmay led Georgiana down, when Mary, who followed with Tom, said, in the strictest possible confidence, "I wish before him, please, you'd call me Miss Johnson. He always does himself, and it sounds much so better than Polly!"

"Oh, that's it!" cried Tom, "is it? *Very* good. But you know

what I said to you yesterday? I'll have no deceit, you know!—not a single dust!"

"I don't want deceit—indeed I don't: only I love him so much I'm afraid of losing him."

"Well, we shall see; but whatever you do, be right up and down straight."

During dinner Georgiana was delighted with Mildmay, he was so exceedingly courteous and unassuming; while he, perceiving her amiable character, was equally delighted with her. Upon Mary, however, his attentions were chiefly lavished. He conceived her to be a quiet, gentle, timid girl, and therefore felt bound to relieve her, by all the means at his command, from the embarrassment under which she conspicuously laboured.

But although thus engaged with Georgiana and Mary he was not inattentive to Tom.

Georgiana had dreaded his satire: she had been apprehensive that Tom would be assailed with that playful but humiliating species of sarcasm, in which, under similar circumstances, and with a view to shine, *some* men of wit delight to revel; but not a single syllable did Mildmay utter which could, by any stretch of the imagination, be construed into a desire to make Tom conscious of his own intellectual inferiority. He, in fact, very soon began to like Tom, and to study him as a "character," while Tom, with his mouth wide open, and his knife and fork held perpendicularly, listened most attentively to all that he said.

The dinner, therefore, passed off well, and when the cloth had been cleared, Mary felt more at ease; but, although she ceased to tremble, she continued to be silent. She had not made, nor did she apparently intend to make, the slightest observation: she sat and sighed, and glanced, and smiled, but did not deem it prudent to utter a word.

Mildmay now proved that his grand forte, at least in conversation, was pathos. The benevolence of his character was at once developed. He appeared to have inspired the pure spirit of philanthropy, and tears often sprang into their eyes as he related, in tones of natural intensity, occurrences even of an ordinary nature. They were charmed with him: he caused them to feel that his mind was of a caste diametrically opposed to that to which his humorous writings had led them to imagine it belonged, and rendered it manifest, without the slightest effort or design, that he possessed a heart which sympathised deeply with affliction.

"Well, now!" cried Tom, when at length Georgiana and Mary retired. "Now we're alone, let me drink to your jovial good health. I don't know whether you know it or not, but I can tell you you've astonished my sentiments just about a little above a bit. Why, send I may live, what a jolly rum fellow you are! I thought you'd have

split my blessed sides. I expected you'd have kept on cracking rum jokes till you'd made us all black in the face, instead of cutting away as you've been cutting away, as solemn and as serious as a seventy-year old ! But I like you, and *no* mistake ! I don't know I don't like you better than if you'd been the snorter I fancied you was. But I shouldn't have thought it ; I could not have thought it. 'By their works—ye shall know them,' as we say in Scripture, but no mortal flesh alive can know you by *your* works, and so I shall always say whenever I come across that passage."

"Which passage," observed Mildmay, "was never intended, I apprehend, to apply to literary works."

"So it appears !" cried Tom. "But send I may live though, who'd ever have thought that the writer which wrote that book was such a calm, quiet, thoughtful swell as you, which don't talk as if you'd got above half a joke in you ? I tell you what *I* thought : I thought that one of them there characters was you—that in describing that character, you'd in fact described yourself."

"Impressions of that kind are very common, but false. Readers almost invariably imagine that an author, while portraying a certain character, endeavours to portray his own, but they are almost invariably wrong."

"Well, I shall think so after this. But it nevertheless popularly gets over me. You even flabbergasted Polly."

"What a quiet, timid creature she is," observed Mildmay.

"She's a *good* girl," cried Tom ; "and there's no mistake *about* her. She's an out-and-out favourite : George is *very* fond of her."

"George ?" said Mildmay. "Who is George ?"

"My George, you know : Georgiana, my wife."

"Oh ! I understand."

"I always call her George, you know, for shortness. But I say ! What do you think of *her* ?"

"I think her one of the most amiable lady-like creatures I ever met."

"Eb ? Ain't she out-and-out ? Ain't there something stunning about her ?"

"She is indeed most elegant and intellectual."

"I knew you would say so ! I *knew* you would ! Still, although Polly hasn't had her eddication, *she's* a nice girl, and that's about the bottom of it. She can no more come it like George, than I can come it like you, because she hasn't had the learning, but she ain't the worse for that a mite—do you think she is ?"

"I do not think so," replied Mildmay, smiling. "I'd rather have a calm gentle creature for a wife, than either a learned or a fine dashing woman."

"I see : so that you may make what you like of her—mould her, you know, as you would a candle, and make her burn bright, and

calm, and steady, and clear, till she reaches the socket of death. I say though, that ain't so bad, is it?"

"The conception is good," replied Mildmay.

"Oh! we can come it sometimes; but we can't, like you swells, keep it up. But I see what you want—you want a wife which don't always want to be a blazing about."

"My chief aim is domestic comfort."

"Then Polly's the girl which'll answer your purpose. She'll suit you to a hair; and as I know you mean nothing at all but what's right, the day she marries you, if you ain't in too much of a hurry—I mean if you don't marry in less than two months—I'll make her a present of five hundred pound."

"Money is not my object. I know its value, of course: I have no contempt for it; but my feelings have never been for one moment influenced by the idea of being to the smallest extent in a pecuniary sense enriched by her."

"Of course not! Of course not! They couldn't. How could they? You couldn't have known I meant to make her a present. Oh, that's clear enough!"

"She is an orphan, I believe?"

"Yes; she's got neither mother nor father."

"The only near relation she has, I understand, is her sister, whom I have seen?"

"Yes; I believe that's the only soul she's got belonging to her."

"Has she lived with you long?"

"Oh, no! only since we married; but before that she lived for years with George's aunt, at Malvern. You should see that aunt of George's—you should only see her! If ever there *was* a tramp, she's one. There's no mistake about her. Were you ever at Malvern?"

"Oh, yes."

"Ain't it a spicy place? Ain't it? We only came back yesterday. But I say, where *did* you find the brains to write that stunning book? I never did in all my days read such an out-and-outer. And then for you to be such a different swell. Well, I don't care! I like you, I know you're a tramp; so the oftener you come and dine with us, old fellow, the better I shall like it, that's all. Never mind me, I'm a rough 'un—I know it; but I shall get polished by-and-by. If I could only talk like you, I shouldn't care. What sort of a jockey are you? Middlin'? Can you manage to stick upon a horse pretty tidy?"

"Pretty well."

"Then we'll have some glorious rides together. When'll you come again?"

"I shall just make a call in the morning, of course."

"Then I'll show you my horses, and if, when you see 'em, you

don't say they're rum 'uns, I'll forfeit my life. And now just let's crack one more bottle before we go up to the petticoats."

"*I'd* rather not have any more."

"What! And this the first time you ever honoured me! Why, you don't think I'm going to let you off so?"

Mildmay was anxious to get to the drawing-room; but another bottle was immediately produced, and Tom—who started the subject of racing, and who could name almost every winning horse from Flying Childers—had for nearly an hour all the talk to himself.

They then rejoined Georgiana and Mary, both of whom had been exceedingly anxious for their reappearance; and when they had had coffee, Tom called for a song.

"Now who'll sing?" he cried. "Don't all speak at once! Georgey! Come, I find you've got your voice again—tip us a stave!"

"Impossible, dear," said Georgiana.

"I wish you would; I want Mr. Mildmay to hear you."

"But, my dear! I have scarcely sufficient voice to *speak*!"

"Then I'll sing myself," cried Tom; and to the horror of Georgiana he commenced:—

"As I was a walking one morning in May—"

"My dear! cried Georgiana; but Tom proceeded.

"I met a pretty young girl, and to her did say—"

"Tom, dear! Tom!" But he still kept on.

"Says I my pretty young girl and its where are you a-going to:  
And its where are you a-going to so blithe and so gay?"

"You positively shall not sing any more!" cried Georgiana, running up to him, and placing her hand upon his mouth. "Did you ever hear such singing in your life, Mr. Mildmay?"

Mildmay smiled, and replied that he thought he had.

"Of course!" cried Tom. "Now just look you here together: I've begun—you know I've begun—there ain't a mite of mistake about that; and as such, the only thing that can stop me now will be a song from Mr. Mildmay."

"Then," observed Georgiana, "if I had sufficient influence over Mr. Mildmay to induce him to oblige us, I would certainly exercise it now."

"Oh do, dear, do!" cried Mary, addressing Mildmay; "you don't *know* how happy you'll make me if you will."

Mildmay, with evident reluctance, rose, and seating himself at the piano, sang to a brilliant accompaniment.

"Bless you!" cried Mary, whose heart, while he played and sang, leaped with joy and pride, "oh! how delightful."

"Ah!" said Tom, "I can't come that—that's a cut above me!"

That's what I call coming it *rayther* ! But I say, George, although you can't sing you can play ! Come, just tip us something."

"I am almost afraid to attempt," said Georgiana, "in the presence of Mr. Mildmay. His touch and taste are so infinitely superior to mine."

"Touch and taste !" cried Tom, as Mildmay gracefully acknowledged the compliment ; "then I'll tell you what do : give us some touch and taste together—make a duet of it, and then we shan't know which plays best."

Mildmay and Georgiana smiled, and then sat down together and played a duet.

"Bravo !" cried Tom at the conclusion ; "that ain't so dusty ! I say," he added, turning to Mildmay, "she don't play so worser—eh ? What do you think of her playing—now come ?"

"I really think it brilliant," replied Mildmay.

"I knew you would !" cried Tom ; "I knew it—I knew you'd say so ; and there ain't a mite of flattery in it. I'll back her against all flesh."

Georgiana and Mildmay then played alternately, and while they were thus engaged Tom went to sleep.

He had not, however, slept long before he was noticed by Georgiana, who went up as privately as possible and awoke him.

"Hollo !" cried Tom, rubbing his eyes, "what's the row ? Oh ! I see," he added, rising ; "well, how do you get on—eh ? enjoying yourselves ?"

"I," said Mildmay, "never enjoyed myself more."

"Well, that's right ; there's nothing alive like it. But I say, Polly, just mix a couple of celestial glasses of brandy-and-water will you ?"

"Not any for me," observed Mildmay.

"What ! no brandy-and-water ! There, go and mix 'em, Polly, and don't let's hear the ghost of another word about it. I'll tell you what it is, old boy, I've got some of the finest cigars you ever tasted !"

"Mr. Mildmay, I know," observed Mary, "is desperately fond of a cigar."

"I never like to smoke," said Mildmay, "in the presence of ladies."

"Lor' bless you," cried Tom, "why they don't care a button about it. I always have a smoke in the evening—always. I never by any chance miss !"

"Indeed," said Georgiana, "I like the scent of a cigar. Believe me, I would not say so if it were to me in the slightest degree offensive."

"Well," returned Mildmay, "if that be the case, I cannot, of course, refuse to have one."

"Of course not," cried Tom. "I'll tell you what it is, old fellow, I find that I shall have to make a Christian of *you*!"

"Tom dear, Tom!" cried Georgiana.

"Well, as true as I'm alive it's a fact," said Tom; "now then!" he added, having produced his cigars, "here you are! Now, if you don't say that *they're* popular and spicy I'll forfeit my life!"

Mildmay took one and praised it, and sat and conversed gaily till eleven, when, in spite of Tom's earnest remonstrances, he bade them adieu for the night.

"*Isn't* he a dear?" exclaimed Mary, after having taken leave of him privately below; "did you ever in all your born days now see such a kind, polite, love of a man?"

"He'll do," said Tom; "oh! he'll do. If he had but a little more devil about him, he'd be what I call an accomplished trump."

"But isn't he elegant? isn't he, now? You don't know how much obliged I am to you for inviting him. Oh! how I shall dream about him all the whole night. I so long to begin, you can't think."

"We shall retire ourselves almost immediately," said Georgiana.

"Well, then, shall I go now?"

"If you please."

"Then I will. Oh! how overjoyed I do feel to be sure! Good night! Good night! God bless you! Good night!"

"Tom, dear," observed Georgiana, when Mary had retired, "how happy you would make me, dear Tom, if you would but try to follow the example of Mr. Mildmay."

"In what particular point?" inquired Tom.

"I allude to his general bearing, dear, which, as you have seen, is that of a perfect gentleman."

"Well, I know it; but just look you here: now I know that you're angry—"

"No, indeed I am not. Believe me, dear, I am not angry."

"Well, but just look you here: if there's any flesh alive which wants to be a gentleman, it's me. There's no man in nature tries harder to be it—and I will be it, see if I won't; but then, you know, I can't be expected, you know, to come out like a gentleman all at once! Gentlemen isn't made right offhand like that, *I* know. But ain't I a learning as fast as flesh *can* learn? And did I put my foot in it this evening in any individual way—now, speak candid?"

"Then I must confess, dear, that whenever you spoke, I was in agony."

"What! oh, if that's it, the goose shall soon be cooked: if he, by coming here, is to make you dissatisfied with me, I'll not have him here again—I'll see him blessed first!"

"Indeed, dear Tom, indeed you misapprehend me—"

"Oh! no I don't. I see how the cat jumps. I know how it is:



I can't *play* so well as him; I can't *sing* so well as him; I can't *talk* so well as him. Oh! dear me, no; I can't do any individual *thing* so well as he can! For two pins I'd break his blessed neck!"

"It gives me pain, dear, to hear you talk thus, and I know that you possess too kind a heart to wound my feelings wantonly."

"Of course you know I wouldn't! I'd have my right *arm* cut off first, you know that!"

"Then, dear Tom, *do* understand me. Mr. Mildmay is a highly accomplished man: there are, in fact, few men so highly accomplished; but can I believe him to be more generous or more affectionate than you are? His mind may be superior—or, I should not say superior—I should rather say it may have been cultivated more carefully; but the qualities of the head when weighed against the qualities of a heart like yours in the balance of *my* judgment, kick the beam. Still, when we see a very superior man—I mean a man who has not only been accustomed to society, but who possesses extraordinary conversational powers—we naturally inspire that spirit of emulation which prompts us to rise above ourselves."

"You'll make it out somehow, I dare say," cried Tom. "He's a wonder, of course!—of course he's a wonder! He can do every blessed individual thing superior to any other flesh."

"Nay, dear, nay. For example, he cannot ride so gracefully as you can."

"I don't know so much about that. He tells me he can stick upon a horse pretty well; and when *he* says pretty well, he means out-and-out."

"Well, if even he *can*—"

"I'll ride him for his ears! I'll ride him for a thousand any day he likes to name, and bet ten to one I beat him hollow."

"But that is not the point. You have frequently expressed a desire to conduct yourself like a gentleman in every respect—"

"And I will do it too."

"Well, dear, a man may be a gentleman, and yet not be able to sing or to play, as a man may be able to sing and to play, and yet not be a gentleman; but no man ever yet acquired, or ever can acquire, the reputation of a gentleman without being able to converse like one."

"Why, of course not. I know that; and therefore I studied that wretch's style from the very first moment he opened his lips, and *meant* to study it if you hadn't put a stopper upon it at once."

"Nay, dear, do not say that. All I said at the commencement of this desperate quarrel—"

"Do you call this a desperate quarrel?"

"It is, dear, I hope, the most desperate quarrel that *we* shall ever have."

"Well, I hope so too. But send I may live, you mustn't come down upon a fellow *quite* so hard; you are very severe."

"Well, forgive me. I am sure that I did not *intend* to be severe. But is it not strange that you wish me to tell you when you make a mistake, and yet when I do you cannot bear it?"

"Now don't say another word about it. You're a good sort, a capital out-and-out sort. Your only object, I know, is to make me a gentleman; and I *will* be one too; so now let's have half a dozen kisses, and make it up before we go to bed."

Georgiana consented. But they had *more* than half a dozen—*many* more than half a dozen—and then retired; and the very last words that Tom uttered that night were, "I *will* be a gentleman, *blowed* if I won't."

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE WHITE-BAIT DINNER.

IN the morning Tom's anger was quite subdued, and when Mildmay called he received him warmly, and took him to see his horses, and had a ride with him round the Park, and endeavoured to imitate his style of speaking; but in his anxiety to avoid Scylla he steered into Charybdis, and spoke in tones of the most ridiculous affectation.

"Wale, ah Mildmay," said he, on their return; "ah, what do yor think of doing with yor body to-day?"

"I should be happy," returned Mildmay, "if the ladies and you would do me the favour of dining with me to-day at Blackwall."

"Yos," returned Tom; "oh, yos. Blackwooll. Ah, give me an ideor; ah, where is Blackwooll?"

"Nearly opposite Greenwich. Are you fond of white-bait?"

"White-bait! an ideor: what is white-bait? Ah! I never tasted none. What is it?"

"A small fish, held to be most delicious."

"Then ah! I'm safe to loike it. Georgianor, you'll go?"

"I shall be most happy," replied Georgiana. "But," she added confidentially, as Mildmay and Mary were conversing, "for Heaven's *sake* speak in your natural way."

"In my natural way?" cried Tom. "Send I may live. Didn't you want me to speak like a gentleman?"

"Yes dear, *yes*!"

"Very well, then! How am I to speak like a gentleman, if I'm to speak in my natural way?"

"But the style which you have adopted is so affected—so absurd!"

"It's the same style as Mildmay's, only more slap."

"Well, pray, dear, revert to your natural style, I prefer it, my dear; I do, indeed."

"You're a rum 'un, George. Send I may live you're a rum 'un. If you know your own mind two minutes together, I'm blowed!"

"Tom, dear, pray do not talk in that strain. You know that I cannot *bear* to see you make yourself ridiculous. "Come," she added, soothingly, "do not be angry; you'll soon, dear, get into the way of it now."

"Can any flesh try to get into the way of it harder than I do?"

"No, dear, no. But it can only be done by degrees. It is your anxiety to do it all at once which thus leads you into error. It must be done gradually."

"Ain't that what I've said all along? Haven't I always told you that I should cook it if you'd only give me time?"

"You have, dear—you have. But do not say another word now on the subject. Mr. Mildmay," she added, "what time do we dine?"

"At what time you please," returned Mildmay. "To me it is perfectly immaterial. Shall we say *four*?"

"Four. Very good."

"And then we shall have time to sit and enjoy the scene on the river."

"Oh!" exclaimed Mary, "that *will* be nice! Shall we go by the steam-boat, love?"

"I *think* that we had better have a coach, and then we shall be able to return when we please, without any annoyance."

"Of course, love—of course. How stupid I am! That will be better, of course."

"And what time do we start?" inquired Tom.

"Why, if we dine at four, we ought to start soon after three."

"Ah! Just so. Well, you know, dear, it's a quarter past two. I say, Mildmay, are you fond of stout?"

"Oh, yes."

"Then we'll have a celestial bottle, and a cigeor, while the petticoats is putting on their traps. Polly, just give 'em an ideor."

Georgiana looked at Tom, and sighed as she retired.

"Now, I'll tell you what it is," said Tom, when he and Mildmay were alone, "I only want one thing to make me as happy as a bird, and that thing you can give me."

"Indeed!" cried Mildmay. "You shall have with pleasure anything at *my* disposal. What is it?"

"Stop till the stout comes, and then I'll just open my mind to you candid. Now, then!" he shouted, on opening the door. "Now, then! where *is* this here stout?"

The stout was produced, with a box of cigars ; and Mildmay, wondering what Tom meant, seated himself at the table.

"Now, just look you here," said Tom. "I'm in a mess, and as I know well you can get me out easy, I'm going to get you to do it. Now, look here, I haven't had your learning, that, perhaps, you don't want to be told. But look here: Georgiana's a lady. Very well. We've got tin to take us into any society: tin enough to live like nob's. But look here. Now, you know, I can't come it as you can; I ain't had the scholarship you've had, and every blessed thing I want is for you just to put me up to it, that's all."

"But, let me understand you," said Mildmay. "You say that you want me to put you up to it—put you up to what?"

"Why, to the dodge," replied Tom. "The dodge of talking popular and spicy."

"The dodge of talking popular and spicy?"

"Yes: you know what I mean. The bottom of it is, I want to talk like a gentleman."

"Well, you have half attained your object already."

"Not a bit of it. I know better. I know I can't do it at all."

"It is the very fact of your knowing that to which I allude. He who is unconscious of any deficiency—who conceives himself to be perfect, will never improve; but let him who *knows* that he is deficient in any point, but desire to be perfect, and his object *is* already half attained."

"Yes, that's all very good; but you see all I know now, you know, is that I can't do it, and as you're the man which can put me up to it, I wish you would—send I may live if I don't. Now just tell me how it's to be cooked. In the first place, what am I to do to get hold of it?"

"Well! In order to be able to talk like a gentleman, it will be necessary for you to associate with gentlemen—to attend to their conversation—to study their language and their style, and when alone, to adopt the practice of reading aloud."

"That'll do! That's better! George reads aloud, and I'll back her to talk against mortal flesh. I'll go in a burster—see if I don't—I'll cook it! But send I may live though, you don't *know* how hard I've been trying at it lately!"

"I noticed this morning that you had been *trying*."

"Did you though?"

"Yes; and as you have named the subject, I may as well at once recommend you to repudiate that affected drawl, which some conceive to be one of the chief characteristics of that which is termed the aristocratic style. It is villanous! Gentlemen—men of education and intellect—never by any *mistake* adopt it. It shows a want of taste, a want of ear, a want of common sense—in short, a want of everything but a most pitiful ambition. Speak naturally—"

"That's just what George told me."

"Speak without effort—make no attempt at 'fine' speaking—use no hard words—above all, use none of which you do not perfectly understand the meaning. Let your language be simple—for the beauty of language consists in its simplicity: and hence it is that the most impressive speakers use the most simple words; get as much as possible into good society, and be most attentive to all that you hear, and you are certain to accomplish the object proposed; for with such an object as that in view, no man can possibly associate long with those who speak well without being able to speak well himself."

"I see—I see!" cried Tom, "I see! That's it—I know it is—and I'll do it too! Send I may live if I don't. George and me never had a word in our lives, except upon that one point. But I say, now look here: I wish whenever I am wrong you'd correct me! *Will* you do me that favour—now, will you?"

"That's a dangerous task for a man to perform who wishes to keep his friend! I have known warm friends to be severed for ever in consequence of these solicited corrections. Men cannot bear to be told of their faults. It is unpleasant to them at all times to have their errors marked. Their vanity is wounded—they feel humiliated—"

"Well, but," said Tom, "such men must be fools!"

"Unhappily all men are fools on that point; were they not, society might be pure, and the world comparatively free from hypocrisy. What man feels pleasure in the society of those who sink him in his own esteem? Where is the man who loves a friend that makes him continually conscious of his own inferiority? Flattery—either direct or indirect—is universally beloved; yet where are men to be found in the world who will not pretend to *hate* flattery? The grand point is to *raise* men in their own esteem—to make them delighted with *themselves*—and he who can descend to do that well is sure to be a most welcome guest. Go where you will, you will find this demanded; and as that, which is falsely termed politeness, has prescribed a supply fully equal to the demand, society is but a masquerade, in which all appear anxious or feel compelled to conceal their real characters."

"Well, but," said Tom, "that's all very well: I can brain all that; I ain't nothing to say against what you mean, that if you make men delighted with themselves they're safe to be delighted with you; but do you think I should be such a donkey as *not* to be delighted at being set right when I am wrong? Why, that's the very thing as would delight me! And when I come to look at it serious in that light, I'm blowed, you know, if I don't think I've about the best of the argumentation!"

"Well," replied Mildmay, smiling, "we shall see. If you *can*

bear to be set right whenever you are wrong you are an extraordinary man."

"I can then—I'll bet ten to one of it! However you come to think I couldn't puzzles me—especially as I asked you to do it as a favour."

"Well," said Mildmay, "I will *try* it!"

"There's a good fellow—that's all I want. You don't *know* how much I should feel obliged to you. If I *could* but come it popular and spicy like you, I should be about the happiest fellow alive. Send I may live though, wouldn't I come it? *Wouldn't* I walk in? Rayther."

"Send I may live though, wouldn't I come it? *Wouldn't* I walk in? Rayther." Can you translate all that into English?"

"English!" cried Tom; "*ain't* it English? I don't know what you may call it, mind you, but I call it capital English."

"Well, we can leave that," said Mildmay, "to be considered another time. I'd better go now and see after a coach."

"But it ain't three yet."

"No, but it soon will be. The ladies, I'm sure, will be ready before we are."

"Well, mayn't I got with you?"

"Of course, come along."

They then went and engaged what was called, at that time, a "glass-coach," and on their return found the ladies quite ready.

"Now, then," said Tom, "have a drop of something short before you go."

"Not anything for *me*," said Georgiana.

"Nonsense. Why Mildmay says it's four or five miles. Come, have a glass of sherry."

Georgiana and Mary had a glass of sherry each; and when Tom and Mildmay had drank an additional bottle of stout, they started.

On the road Georgiana conversed almost exclusively with Mildmay, being anxious that his style might be adopted by Tom, who certainly listened with the utmost attention, and therefore but seldom made any remark. Mary was almost perfectly silent. "Yes," "No," and "Very," were the only words she uttered until they arrived at Blackwall.

"This is better," said Tom, having entered the tavern. "Rather a spicy crib, send I may live! Beats the Rutland, at Newmarket, hollow."

"Oh!" exclaimed Mary, rushing to the window! "Oh, how delightful. Dear *me*, what a heavenly place, to be sure. Well, I *never*! Oh, look at the ships. Are you not a darling to bring me here," she added privately to Mildmay, who gave her at the moment an affectionate glance. "You are! and I could cry for joy."

"I say, George," cried Tom; "*won't* we come down here a time or two, eh? Did you ever see anything like it alive?"

"It is, indeed, a most charming place, dear," replied Georgiana.

"I believe you. We'll come down here once a week at least, while we're in town. I say; fancy to yourself, now, me sitting here and you sitting there, with the wine on the table here and the river out there, and me smoking cigars, and you eating of fruit, and then calculate how many kisses we should have in the course of a quarter of an hour."

Georgiana playfully patted his cheek, and Tom privately caused their lips to meet in an instant.

As Mildmay had ordered dinner immediately on his arrival, they were very soon enabled to commence, and as Tom was about to assist the ladies to soup, he stirred it round with an expression of intense curiosity.

"I say," he inquired, "where's your white-bait in here?"

"Oh no," replied Mildmay, smiling; "we shall have it by-and-by."

"Well, it struck me they wouldn't go to drownd it in here: they call it a bait, I s'pose, 'cause it's a feed? But, I say, this *here* don't smell so dusty. Will you have a go in?"

"I *will* take some, please."

"Will you take some, I meant. Yes, that's better. Oh, I shall come it by-and-by."

Georgiana blushed, and looked at Mildmay, who, however, took no apparent notice; and the dinner proceeded.

"Oh!" exclaimed Mary, when at length the white-bait had been produced; "oh! there's a lot of tiny little tittlebats. Oh! Why, I never knew that them things were good to eat before."

"Nor more didn't I," observed Tom: "I used to catch thousands on 'em when I was a kid."

"*This* is white-bait," said Mildmay, addressing Georgiana.

"White how much!" cried Tom: "what's that? Well, send I may live. But you don't mean to say they ain't tittlebats, do you?"

"Oh, a different species of fish altogether: in fact, a peculiar species."

"Well, as true as I'm alive, I thought 'em tittlebats."

"And so did I," interposed Mary, who felt much embarrassed; "I'm very, very sorry I made the mistake."

"Oh, that mistake has been frequently made," returned Mildmay: "but try them."

"Well, but I say," cried Tom; "is that how you eat 'em? With that there brown bread and butter?"

"Yes."

"What rum 'uns you Londoners are: there's nothing like you alive: no flesh can beat you. I say, though," he added, smacking

his lips, "they're none so worser; eh, George, how do you like 'em?"

"Oh, I think them delicious," replied Georgiana.

"Oh!" cried Mary, "how nice, to be sure."

"But, I say," cried Tom; "it's a bit of a swindle not bringing 'em up till we're pretty nigh done: that ain't exactly populor, that ain't, is it?"

"It is the invariable practice," said Mildmay.

"Ah! I don't like it a mite the more for that; they should let us begin with 'em—bring 'em up first—and then we might tuck in a regular lot."

"Tom, dear," exclaimed Georgiana, "how you talk."

"Well, but you know it's a fact, and, as facts is stubborn things, you know, this is one on 'em. What's the use of sending up the spiciest dish of the lot, just when you ain't got a mite of appetite left? I call it a swindle, that's what I call it, and no flesh can prove that it ain't. I say, tip us a few more, though, will you?"

His plate was immediately replenished, and, while almost every sentence he uttered caused Georgiana to blush, Mildmay, perceiving her embarrassment, laughed with him constantly with a view to her relief.

"Now then," said Tom, after dinner, "let's do the thing populor and slap. Here's the wine, and here's the window; here's the river, and here's us. Now let's all be happy, and I'll tell you how we'll cook it. We'll draw up to the window and have a cigar, and then we shall see all we shall see. What say, George?"

"Oh," replied Georgiana, "I am perfectly agreeable."

"Well then, come along. Here you are: here's a chair for you, and here's another for Polly. Mr. Mildmay," he added, with mock elegance, "I beg that you'll be seated. I'm getting on, you see! Oh! I shall be able to come it by-and-by. I shall be so as no flesh can beat me!—that'll be about the bottom of it. I say, George, you don't know who's going to learn me, do you?"

"I am afraid," replied Georgiana, "that your tutor will be somewhat puzzled, dear, be he whom he may."

"Not at all! Not a bit of it. No such thing. No flesh can learn faster than I shall. But I say, can't you guess now, who's going to do it?"

"I cannot, indeed."

"Then I'll tell you at once. Mr. Mildmay's the man. Eh? What do you think of that? We've had it all over. I've told him what I want, and he's told me how to get it. It's all cooked—you'll see by-and-by."

"But, my dear," said Georgiana, "we have no right to impose such a task upon Mr. Mildmay."

"Oh, I'll make it all right with him. He'll do it."



"And I'm quite sure," said Mary, "you can't find a cleverer man."

"Bravo, Polly," cried Tom. "Very good. That remark ain't so dusty."

"Dusty," echoed Georgiana. "I fear that Mr. Mildmay will very soon be tired of the task he has undertaken."

"I thought," observed Mildmay, "that our conversation had been of a strictly private character."

"Oh, what's the odds!" cried Tom. "I don't want, you know, all the whole world to know it, but we're all as one here, you know, of course. George knows I haven't had your scholarship: she knows, too, there's no flesh alive which wants to do the thing popular more than me. You see I don't want before you to make myself out what I ain't, because that would be nothing but nonsense. I told you this morning as I tell you now, that I know I can't come it as I ought to come it, and as I should like to come it, and that's the whole truth. There's no nonsense at all about me. You'll find me right up and down straight, and I don't care who knows it. All I want is to do the trick a little near the mark, and you're just him which *can* show me how it's to be done. *I'll* make it all right in the long run, you know. Only just make me come out as slappy as you, and I shan't care a button for mortal flesh."

"Well," said Mildmay, "I cannot help wishing that this task had been imposed on some one else; but we shall see. I certainly should have suggested the expediency of its being undertaken by Mrs. Todd, whose taste is so refined, and whose language is so pure, still—"

"That's about the cut!" cried Tom. "That's about the style I want to come it in! 'Whose taste is so refined, and whose language is so pure.' Eh? Send I may live though, when I can cut it as fat as that, eh, George? You'll never learn me, because you don't think I shall ever have it in me."

"I fear that I shall never be able to *teach* you, because you'll not mind what I say."

"What! Georgey! George! Well! Send I may live! Not mind what you say? Here, *just* show a light. Now then. When did I ever *not* mind what you say?"

"Why, for example, my dear; how often have I begged of you not to use the word *learn*, when you mean *teach*, and yet you still persist in doing so?"

"Well, ain't it the same thing, as near as a toucher?"

"Certainly not, dear. To learn and to teach are diametrically opposed."

"Eh? Is that a fact, Mildmay?"

"Oh, certainly," replied Mildmay, smiling.

"Well, but you know I don't call that not minding what you say. I only forget. That's all that can be made of it. No flesh alive

ever paid more attention to what you say than me, I know jovial well."

"How beautifully the steamers glide," observed Mildmay, wishing to change the subject.

"Ah, don't they!" cried Tom; "but what gets over me, you know's this, that they're able to turn 'em to a hair. Now look at that one there—just keep your eye upon it. There you are, you see, to a quarter of an inch. It's wonderful, ain't it? Blowed if it ain't. But I say, what do you think of this flying machine? Is it possible, think you, to make a thing light enough to cut along like a blessed bird?"

"Why, when we look at things now in constant use, which our father's conceived to be impossibilities, we are scarcely justified in saying that anything is impossible. That a machine *light* enough can be made is quite clear, but buoyancy is not the object. There is, for example, no buoyancy in a stone, and yet you or I can throw a stone a hundred yards. And why? Because the impetus we give it at starting imparts a velocity which carries it that distance, and if we could only *keep up* that velocity it would go a hundred miles, or any distance we pleased. The grand object therefore is to maintain the velocity imparted by the impetus given at first. I don't mean to say that we *can* do this; but if we can, the only difficulty will be surmounted, seeing that the weight and size of the machine itself will then be perfectly immaterial."

"I see!" cried Tom; "oh, I can brain that. It's just the same as playing at ducks and drakes; we could make a thousand on 'em instead of three or four, if we could only keep the stone up."

"The principle is the same."

"Oh! I can see as far through a brick wall, you know, as here and there one! But I say, what a capital dodge it would be if a man could find out the means—eh? What an out-and-out fortune he'd make!"

"He might make a fortune certainly."

"But how could he be off it?"

"The chances are that he would but assist in making the fortunes of others, while he continued poor. The inventors of grand schemes seldom make fortunes."

"Well, I dare say you're right, for there's a man which stands in rags at the foot of Blackfriars-bridge, which writes up—"The first original inventor of kidney puddings!"

"Yes, but just cross the road," returned Mildmay, smiling, "and you'll find that this gentleman's pretensions are impugned by a rival, who boldly declares upon his lantern that he is "*The Reel First Original Inventor*."

"Tom, dear!" exclaimed Georgiana. "How ridiculous you are, to be sure! Mr. Mildmay was saying that the inventors of grand

schemes seldom make fortunes. He didn't contemplate the inventors of kidney puddings."

"Well; but it's all the same in the long run!" cried Tom. "An inventor *is* an inventor, and there's no mistake about it."

"Near the spot which you have named," resumed Mildmay, "there lives a poor chemist who invented a most ingenious and destructive grenade. He submitted it to the government, and was referred to a board of military gentlemen, by whom it was repudiated utterly. Well, in less than two years from that time, this very same grenade was introduced by one of these *gentlemen*, who was rewarded in consequence by the government with a knighthood attached to two thousand a year for life!"

"Ah! he was a blackguard, you know," cried Tom. "Send I may live, I should like to *kick* him."

"But had the chemist no remedy?" inquired Georgiana.

"None," replied Mildmay. "It was at the suggestion of this one man that the invention was repudiated as being valueless by the board: the rest did not sufficiently enter into its construction to recognise it when reproduced. But inventions of great importance are in general a curse to the inventors rather than a blessing. They spend so much of their time and substance in bringing their inventions to perfection, and so deeply inspire the hope of some brilliant advantage, that they are almost invariably involved in a pecuniary sense, before perfection is attained; and then, by the usual delays, they are ruined. I have a machine which, with the aid of ten firm and intelligent men, I would undertake, on a regular field of battle, to defeat an army of fifty thousand. But, at present, of what use is it to me? I have submitted it to the government; I have undertaken to prove, in ten minutes, that it is capable of doing that which I say that it is capable, and I do not require a single shilling in the shape of remuneration until I have proved it, and yet the only answer which repeated applications during the last four years have produced is, that if I—of *course*, in confidence—reveal the secret to a certain 'board,' its merits will be tested. They will give no security—no indemnity: they will come to no terms whatever. They require me to reveal the secret unconditionally; and the very men to whom I am required to reveal it, are those who are most interested in keeping such an invention back, seeing that it would at once destroy the *trade* of war, and consequently leave them no 'glory' to gain."

"I say, though," observed Tom; "it must be a rattler."

"It is! and yet its construction is singularly simple."

"Well; but why don't you sell it among the foreign powers?"

"I am too much attached to my own country to entertain the idea for a moment. If I were to do so, and thus be the means of

promoting the downfall of England, what would my feelings as an Englishman be then?"

"Well, they wouldn't be very pleasant: no, I didn't think of that. But, I say," he added, as several itinerant musicians began to play beneath their window, "that ain't so dusty, is it?"

"Oh dear!" exclaimed Mary. "What heavenly music. Do look, dear," she added, having rushed to the other window, to which she was followed by Mildmay. "Oh! isn't it nice?"

"Are you *very* fond of music?" inquired Mildmay, as he pressed her hand warmly.

"Oh, very," she sighed. "It makes me feel with you in heaven."

"Do you think, dear Mary," he inquired, "that if you were mine, you would always be as happy as you are now?"

"Oh yes," replied Mary, "with you, dear, always. I couldn't be otherwise than happy with you, love. You would be my comfort, my darling, my joy. I should dote on the very ground you trod."

"And, of course, annoy me *occasionally*," he added, with a smile.

"No, never!" she replied; "no, never! I *should* be ungrateful if I did; and I am not ungrateful, indeed I am not. No, believe me, I'd do all in my power to please you. If affection and obedience *could* secure your love, you would love me, dear, fondly for ever. Oh! we should be happy—I feel that we should!"

Mildmay silently pressed her hand, and then rejoined Tom and Georgiana.

Shortly after this they had coffee, and sat and enjoyed it with the music below and the gay scene before them till dusk, when, at Mildmay's suggestion, they ordered the coach, and with feelings of pleasure returned to town.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE MARRIAGE OF MILDMAY AND MARY.

DURING the next two months Mildmay visited them constantly. He almost invariably spent his evenings with them. He had for nearly three years kept aloof from society—forming no private circle and associating only with a few professional men, whose time, like his own, was chiefly occupied in study—but now he re-inspired all his old social feelings: loving Mary, as he did, respecting Tom highly, and having a pure esteem for Georgiana, he never felt happy but when he was with them: nor did they feel happy when they were not with him, for while Tom was beyond expression proud of

his friendship, Georgiana regarded him as if he had been her own brother, and Mary looked upon him as an idol to be worshipped.

It must not, however, be concealed that she at the same time viewed him as an oracle to be feared! In his presence she never threw off that restraint which she imagined his intellectual superiority imposed, and so apprehensive was she of committing herself, that she seldom indeed ventured to make any observation of importance, and when she did her tongue was guarded, and every word she uttered duly weighed before expressed, and thus she acquired the reputation of being a calm, quiet, unassuming girl, who, as a wife, would be amiable, gentle, and devoted.

"Now, I say," observed Tom, confidentially, just before Georgiana's minority had expired, "look here—when do you mean to do the trick?"

"What trick?" inquired Mildmay.

"Why, when do you mean to tie up? *You* know jovial well what I mean; but if you *will* have it in Latin, look here: when do you mean to get married—eh?"

"Oh! I understand. Well, I think in about a month."

"Make it a week. It'll be over all the quicker! Make it a week. I'll tell you why: George comes of age next Tuesday. Well, now although you know we shan't touch the mopuses that day, yet I should like you know to have what we call a little sort of celebrity about it, and as your wedding would give it the fillip, nothing could come more nearer the mark. Make it a week. Say you'll go to church on Tuesday? It won't make a single dust of difference, you know, about what I promised Polly: that'll be all right, of course; but I should like to see you tied up that day above all other days in the year. Say you will?"

"As far as I am concerned," replied Mildmay, "no objection will be offered—"

"Bravo!" cried Tom.

"But," added Mildmay, "Mary, of course, must be consulted."

"Oh, that'll be all right. I'll bet ten to one of it. You pop the question, and if she's got the ghost of a 'no' in her, I'll forfeit my life. Will you do it?"

"I will."

"Will you do it at once? Here she is. I say, Polly," he added, as Mary entered the room, "now you know it ain't a mite of use dilly-dallying, is it? Now just look you here: next Tuesday, you know, is George's birthday. Well, now you know, as it's what you must come to, you may as well be married on that day as any other day in the whole blessed year. Very well. Now you know I should like it to be on that day, and so would Mildmay, I know, and if you'd like it *too*, say the word!"

"Perhaps," observed Mildmay, perceiving that Mary was much

embarrassed, "perhaps we had better arrange this little affair in private."

"Of course!" cried Tom; "that's just what I mean! I don't want to take the job out of your hands! Not a bit of it! Only it did strike *me* that if you was tied up, you know, that day, we should all be popular and spicy together! That's all! So I'll leave you to settle it between you; but don't be long about it, because I'll tell you why: I want you both to go with George and me down to Greenwich. Now, no nonsense, Polly. Mark my words, if you have, it won't become you, that's all."

"Mary," said Mildmaj, when Tom had left the room, "you have heard what Todd has said, my dear, in his rough way? You have heard him express a wish to see us married next Tuesday? What say you?"

"Dear William," replied Mary, faintly, "I am, as I ever shall be, in your hands. By you I must ever be governed. Your wish, love, must ever be mine. Teach me how to answer—teach me what to say."

"Well, dear Mary, if I am to teach you how to answer, I certainly shall teach you to say 'Then on Tuesday let it be.' But mind! I do not press you—nor would I teach you to answer thus if I conceived that you had the slightest objection to be mine so soon. If you have *no* objection—"

"Dear! I can have no objection. You are all the world to me. Whatever you desire me to do shall be done. By your directions I must always be guided."

"You are a good girl, Mary. You know not how fondly I love you! I feel that happiness *must* spring from our union."

"Oh, it will be joy!"

"Well!" cried Tom, as he returned with Georgiana, while Mildmaj and Mary were fondly embracing, "all right? Bargain struck?"

"Yes," replied Mildmaj; "we have come to terms."

"Nothing like it. That's the way—ain't it, George? Ain't you pleased?"

"I certainly am pleased that that day has been fixed, dear," replied Georgiana; "still, as I have said, in so delicate a matter you had not the slightest right to interfere."

"Oh, it's all as one! They don't mind me! I dessay now, if the truth was known, they're very much obliged to me for bringing it about! There's nothing like coming to the point, is there, Mildmaj?"

"Nothing," replied Mildmaj, smiling. "And if Mary will forgive you for bringing this matter to a crisis, I'll follow her example."

"Oh, I'll forgive him!" cried Mary, promptly.

"Then consider yourself forgiven by both."

"Very good!" cried Tom. "But I say, what do you mean? It's

a new dodge, ain't it—rayther—to forgive a man for doing a kindness? *Send* I may live!"

We were only joking," said Mary, with a smile. "It *was* kindness—we know it."

"Of course! And now that's cooked, run and put on your traps, and don't be a fortnight about it."

Mary, on the instant, left the room, and when she returned they started for Greenwich. But oh! what feelings of joy she inspired while fixing her mind on her bridal day! How happy she should be—how lovely she should look—what a beautiful bride she should make to be sure! With orange-blossoms in her hair, a flowing veil, an elegant dress, white satin slippers, white kid gloves, and a handkerchief of the finest texture trimmed with the deepest lace! Shouldn't she look like a perfect angel? and wouldn't her William love her then? Oh, she felt sure she should faint with pleasure—it would be so ecstatic!

From that day until the following Tuesday her wedding-dress occupied all her thoughts. She would have had it made in the most extravagant style, but as the taste of Georgiana prevailed, it was neat, yet exceedingly elegant. On the Monday she put it on half a dozen times, and imagined each time that she looked more charming. She, moreover, dressed her hair in half a dozen fashions, but fixed, at length, upon Georgiana's style. She was all excitement. Even in the presence of Mildmay she panted and trembled with impatience, and when he had left on the Monday night with expressions and feelings of fond affection, she flew to her room, and for nearly two hours was engaged in arranging some articles of jewellery of which he had made her a present. The earrings could, of course, be worn in one way only—nor was there any great degree of difficulty about the arrangement of the brooch, but the chain attached to the watch, which she kissed vehemently a hundred times, puzzled her exceedingly. She wished to show it all, and in order that every link might be seen, she crossed it and pinned it, and twisted it about in the most extraordinary manner imaginable, until she decided on making it go three times round her brooch and then down to her watch, which she fixed on the point of her stomach.

Having thus surmounted this difficulty she went to bed; but not to sleep—she could *not* go to sleep—she tried and failed continually—her thoughts flew from her toilet to the church, from the church to Gravesend, and from Gravesend back to her toilet again, with so much rapidity, that she turned and tossed about until five, when she rose and proceeded to dress.

The servant had been directed to call her at six, and Georgiana had promised to be with her at seven; but before six o'clock Georgiana awoke, and being anxious to render all possible assistance, immediately rose and went up to her room.

Tom also "turned out," for having had a new suit made expressly for the occasion, he was nearly as impatient to see himself in it as Mary was to see the completion of her toilet. Independently of which, he felt that as eight was the hour appointed for the performance of the ceremony, unless he got up then he should not be ready to receive Mildmay at half-past seven—an hour and a half being in his judgment just the time it would take him to dress as he intended. And he was perfectly correct. He *was* an hour and a half dressing: neither more nor less; and therefore finished just in time to receive Mildmay.

"I say," he exclaimed, having greeted him cordially, "what do you think of these—eh? Tidy togs; ain't they?"

"An excellent fit," replied Mildmay, as Tom turned to exhibit. "Certainly a most gentlemanly suit."

"Rayther," said Tom. "Eh? *Rayther*. It strikes me as being howdacious! Look here: satin inside the skirts; that's a dodge, ain't it—eh? Is yours lined with satin?"

"No, *my* tailor wants imagination. He is a more quiet fellow."

"Send I may live!" exclaimed Tom, as Mary entered the room. "There's a shell! What, is that you, Polly? popularly and philosophically *you*?"

Mildmay approached and embraced her.

"Well!" resumed Tom, "I'll forfeit my *life* if this don't beat all flesh. *There's* a spicy turn out! *Turn* round. Oh! don't mention it. If that ain't howdacious then pigs ain't pork. As true as I'm alive though, you look out-and-out! Slap—and no mistake about it! Here, give us a kiss. You won't after this, you know, have half a chance. Besides, I'm the dad. I'm entitled to the last, ain't I, Mildmay—eh? Ain't I?"

"Take it," said Mildmay.

"Of course!" cried Tom.

"Well," said Mary, "don't rumple my veil."

"Rumple your veil? Not a bit of it. There! And now where's George?"

"She'll be here directly."

"Very good.—Mildmay! I say, do you like early purl?"

"I never tasted it."

"What! never tasted early purl? Why, what have you been doing with yourself since your birth? It's the primeest stuff as is. There's nothing alive like it. I've ordered a jug to be cooked, as we shan't have breakfast until we come back. That's the stuff, my boy, to warm the muscles of your heart."

"What is it made of?"

"Oh, *I* have it made with rum and beer and eggs and ginger. Hot, you know—smoking hot."

"I mustn't touch it."



"Not touch it!"

"No. It's nice, I've no doubt; but I have a desire to avoid the headache to-day."

"The headache! Pooh! popularly ridiculous!"

"It may be," returned Mildmay, smiling; "still, I'll have no 'early purl.'"

"Then you're just what I call one which don't know what's good: because, if there happens to be one thing in nature more spicy than anything else, it's purl."

Georgiana now entered, looking beautiful indeed. Without any effort, and certainly without the least design, she threw Mary into the shade. Her dress was much plainer; there had not been the slightest attempt at "display;" no style, indeed, could be more simple, yet her air was so easy, so graceful, so elegant, that Tom—who was just as fond of extravagance in dress as Mary *could* be—was struck with admiration.

"I say," he cried, "Mildmay! Send I may live! Don't the petticoats, think you, look rayther celestial? There's another turn out. There's nothing about her, and yet there she is. I tell you what, George, if this here's to be the go—if you're to look just as lovely as this, you know, *every* time there's a wedding—we had better have one about nine times a week."

Georgiana patted him playfully with her glove, and then conversed gaily with Mildmay and Mary.

"Where is this early purl?" cried Tom. "George, just touch the bell, there's a brick. But I say, Polly, where's your sister—eh?"

"She'll meet us at church, I've no doubt," replied Mary; "I don't think she'll come here, 'cause she's such a timid thing."

"Oh, well. Because time's nearly up, you know! Now then," he added, as the servant entered, "now? Where in the world is this early purl?"

"I'm sorry, sir," replied the servant, "but I just put the jug on the hob for a minute—"

"What! you did, did you! Don't say *another* word, if you do I shall do you a mischief. The jug flew, of course, and the early purl—*get* out of my sight, and don't let me see you again for a month. Have you got any coffee?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then bring us four cups up like lightning! Fly! Send I may live," added Tom, "if servants ain't just as much trouble as they're worth."

"You're quite right," said Mary; "they are so excessively stupid."

"What *all* on 'em?" inquired Tom.

Mary blushed and held her peace.

"Well, I'm sorry," said Mildmay, "you lost your purl."

"A swindle," cried Tom, "a dead swindle! Never mind. *I'll* cook a cup of coffee when it comes."

The coffee was produced, and Tom—having assured Mary, privately, that what he had said was "a slip of the tongue"—filled each of the cups up with brandy, and handed them gracefully round.

"Now then," he exclaimed, having finished his coffee, "time's up. Now, Polly, don't be a fool, you know! Pluck up your spirits. Now then: come along."

Mary at once took his arm, and Mildmay followed with Georgiana, and having entered the carriage, which had been some time waiting, they gaily proceeded to church.

Mary's feelings had no depth: they were light, superficial: the slightest thing would cause her either to weep or to laugh. That she had an affection for Mildmay, there can be no doubt—but that affection was not intense. He was a gentleman and a man of talent. She was proud of him, therefore. But it is extremely questionable whether his position in society, and the dress in which she then appeared, had not a far greater influence over her than any pure feeling of love. Of this, however, Mildmay had no conception. He believed that she loved him passionately. He was happy in that belief, and hence, to love, he ascribed many words and many looks which might have been traced to vanity.

At the church door they met Mary's sister, who was dressed in a plain, quiet, unpretending style, and whom Mary would, therefore, have passed unnoticed willingly, but Tom shook hands most cordially with her, and Mildmay gave her his disengaged arm, while Georgiana, who knew her timidity well, addressed her with the utmost kindness.

The clergyman, who met them in the aisle, conducted them into the vestry; and when the preliminaries had been arranged, they proceeded to the altar, and the ceremony commenced. During its progress Georgiana wept freely, and so did Mary's sister; but not a single tear was shed by Mary herself. She was smiling throughout; and when, at the conclusion, she took Mildmay's arm, she hugged it in the perfect conviction of security.

Having attached their signatures to the register and taken leave of the clergyman, of whom Mildmay had some slight personal knowledge, they returned and had breakfast, during which Tom went on in such an extraordinary manner, that at length Georgiana observed, "Now, Tom, dear, I *must* be very angry, indeed I must, if you continue to go on so." But as this observation was made with a smile, laughter was the only effect it produced, and in that Mary joined immoderately.

After breakfast the ladies withdrew to dress, and Tom got out a bottle of sherry. It had been, at the suggestion of Mary, arranged that they should pass a few days at Gravesend—that being the place at which she and Mildmay first met—and as Tom would not hear of

the party being separated, the carriage in which they had been to church being a large one, had been engaged to take them altogether. The hour fixed for starting was eleven o'clock, and at that time the ladies being ready, reappeared just as the carriage-and-four came up; but Tom, who had a case of champagne for the occasion, insisted upon opening a few bottles before they started.

"I don't care what anybody says," he exclaimed. "Down you shall all of you sit and have a sip, with a slice of this cake, which ain't yet been walked into. What's champagne for but to drink? What's wedding-cakes for but to eat? We're not married *every* day of our lives! There, sit down, and let's all be jovial. Come, Polly, my girl—I beg pardon—Mrs. Mildmay: *will* you do me the honour, Mrs. Mildmay, to walk into that there popular cake."

"I beg," said Mary, smiling, "that in future, Mr. Todd, you'll not forget yourself."

"Bravo!" said Tom; "now, cut up the cake. There," he added, having opened the first bottle, "try that. If that ain't spicy, it ought to be, that's all. Mildmay! here, just pass it round, there's a brick!"

Mildmay, with alacrity, did so; and Mary, having tasted it, exclaimed, "Oh! how nice! Oh! isn't it beautiful! Is this champagne? Well, I never!"

"You have tasted champagne before, of course?" observed Mildmay.

"Never! It's strange I never did; but oh, how I love it!"

"Now, then," said Tom, having opened another bottle, "excuse me a moment. I'll be back in a brace of shakes;" and taking two bottles from the case, he left the room. "Now then, you sirs," he cried, on reaching the front door, to which the postboys came in an instant. "You've got a man with you?"

"Yes, your honour," they replied.

"Then drop down into the kitchen and have a snack. You'll find plenty of beef and beer there, and as a wind-up, drink the health of the bride and bridegroom in this."

The postboys thanked him, and took the bottles with them, and Tom returned to the drawing-room.

"Now," said he, immediately on his return, "I've a popular toast to propose. 'Here's health to the bride! long life to her. May she never want nothing, and have all the joys she can wish herself.'"

The toast was duly honoured.

"Heel-taps," cried Tom. "Come, come! heel-taps, heel-taps! I say, George! your glass is half full!"

"You must, indeed you must, excuse *me*," said Georgiana; but Mary, who drank her own health, did not wish to be excused.

"Now, then," said Tom, "I say, Mildmay, fill the glasses! Now, then, I've another spicy toast to propose. 'Here's a jovial good

health to the bridegroom. May he live for ever, and die happy ! And that's all the harm I wish him."

This toast was also responded to ; and when the laughter induced by Tom's eloquence had ceased, Mildmay, with much taste and feeling, thanked him and Georgiana for the kindness they had invariably shown to him and Mary.

"That's better," said Tom. "That's certainly better. I thought I'd your style to a hair; but I find I haven't got it yet exactly. But that'll come natural enough by-and-by. Now, then, let's just have one bottle more, and we'll start."

"Don't open any more," said Mildmay. "I am sure that the ladies will agree with me when I say, that we have already sufficient on the table."

"Nonsense," cried Tom, "there's only one will. That's George."

"Not any more for me," said Mary's sister. "I mustn't touch a single drop more."

"Don't be foolish!" whispered Mary. "You silly thing, this'll never hurt you!"

"Now, then," said Tom, having opened the other bottle, "here you are ! It must be drunk, you know, now it's opened !"

It *was* drunk ; and Mary—who emptied her glass with undiminished gusto—had very considerably more than her share.

"Now, if you have no objection," said Tom, "we'll just allow our noble selves to start." And Mildmay, at once taking Mary's arm in his, led the way to the carriage.

On the road Mary was excessively affectionate, and for the first few miles laughed and chatted with unexampled gaiety ; but they had no sooner passed over Shooter's-hill than her spirits sank, and she wept.

"Dear Mary," said Mildmay, who perceived the tears in an instant, "are you not well?"

"I am so happy," she cried, clinging still closer to him ; "oh, so happy. Dear William, you will not be angry with me ? I am—I am so happy !"

"Angry, my love ! How can I be angry to see you happy?"

"Oh, I am full of joy !"

"Come, I say, that won't do," cried Tom. "We ain't a-going to stand any tears, you know, to-day."

Mary placed her head upon Mildmay's shoulder, and closing her eyes, clung to him until they reached Dartford.

Here they alighted ; and Georgiana, who had dreaded the effect of the champagne, and had more than once privately warned Mary of its strength, took her into one of the bedrooms, and leaving her sister with her, went down to ask the landlady what could be done.

The landlady—who had had some experience—no sooner ascertained exactly how the case stood, than seizing a bottle of soda-water

and a glass, she went up with Georgiana, and found Mary weeping bitterly.

"Come, my dear lady," said the good woman, soothingly, "don't take on so: you'll be better by-and-by. Does your head ache, dear?"

"Oh, fit to split," sobbed Mary. "Oh, dreadful."

"Then drink this, there's a dear: drink it right up! Now, then," she added, on opening the bottle, "if you don't leave a drop in the glass you'll be well."

Mary drank part of it eagerly, and wished to reject the rest; but as the landlady earnestly pressed her, she did at length empty the glass.

Seeing Mary in such good hands, Georgiana returned to Tom and Mildmay, and having explained to them that Mary would very soon be better, suggested that she might have taken too much cake.

"Of course," cried Tom, "she *did* walk into it. I remember now, she went in a burster! That was it!—that and the excitement together. *You* wasn't the thing, you know, George, when *you* married. You wasn't exactly right all day! And now I remember, *you* had a lot of cake, and it's just the same with Polly."

"The excitement, no doubt, was the principal cause," observed Mildmay.

"No doubt," said Tom; "but she'll soon be all right again now, won't she, George?"

"Oh, she's recovering fast!"

"Very good. And now, I say, what shall we have?"

"Upon my word," replied Mildmay, "I'd rather not have anything more yet."

"Oh, we must have something! We can't come into a house like this, you know, without having something. Are you peckish?"

"Not at all; but I'll drink no more without eating."

"Very good," said Tom, ringing the bell; "I'll cook it. What have you got in the house?" he inquired, when the waiter appeared. "Have you anything spicy? Have you got such a thing as a couple of chickens?"

"Yes, sir."

"Cooked?"

"Yes, sir."

"Devil 'em; and don't be a month about it."

During the absence of Georgiana, Mary had been extremely ill; but on her return she found her much better.

"She'll do now, nicely," observed the kind landlady. "All she wants, now her headache's gone, is something to raise her spirits, poor dear—something to restore the tone of the stomach, as the saying is—and that I'll go and make her."

"There's a good soul," said Georgiana; "*I'll* remain here till you return."

"How ever shall I look in his face," cried Mary, as the landlady left the room.

"Do not distress yourself now about that," said Georgiana; "I suggested that the cake might not have agreed with you."

"And does *he* think it was that? Does he not know the real cause?"

"He ascribes it all to excitement."

"Thank Heaven!"

"But *you* know the real cause, Mary, do you not?"

"Oh, that wine! that wine! I've a good mind to say I'll never touch another drop while I've breath!"

"Nay, that would be absurd. Say, rather, that knowing its strength, you will henceforth take it in *moderation*."

"I will; I will. But it was so nice, and it went down so smooth; I didn't think it would have served me so. I know what you told me; I know what you said, and I only wish I'd taken your advice. However, it's the first time, and shall be the last. All I'm glad of is, that Sarah wouldn't take any more."

"Ah, you said it wouldn't hurt me," observed her sister; "but I felt it glow, and I knew it was strong."

The landlady soon reappeared with a cordial, of which Mary freely partook; and the consequence was, that in less than ten minutes she felt sufficiently recovered to go to the glass. She did not, however, like her appearance at all. She looked haggard and pale; but Georgiana and Sarah assisted her in restoring as much of her beauty as possible, and then returned with her to Mildmay and Tom, who were eating the devilled chickens with great animation.

Mildmay rose the moment they entered the room, and taking the hand of Mary, affectionately kissed her.

"You still look pale, my girl," said he.

"I do," she replied; "but I feel well now."

"I say," cried Tom, "won't you do as we do?"

"No; you get on," said Georgiana. "You don't know what we have had, does he, Mary?"

"Oh, well," returned Tom, "if you've all been a muggin' yourselves in private, why, that's a horse of another colour, quite. Come along, Mildmay, let's finish this. It's out-and-out, ain't it? Never tasted nothing more popular. Rayther too much cayenne, *p'raps*; but that's nothing."

Having finished the chickens, Tom rang for the bill, and ordered the horses—which had been engaged to take the carriage through—to be put in again. He fancied, when he gave this order, that there was something peculiar in the expression of the waiter's countenance; but that passed off, and the bill was brought in.

"Hallo," said he, playfully, "here's a go! *Look* here. Haven't they been muggin' themselves, that's all!"

"Indeed," said Georgiana, with a smile, "we have paid for what we had. We were not quite so simple as to let you know all."

"Ay, but we do know all, now! Here it is, down again! *Here* you are, Mildmay! *Put* on your specks. *Gin* and beer!—*rum* and shrub!—*brandy*-and-*water*!—oh, send I may live."

"Indeed, Mr. Tom," said Georgiana, "we have had nothing of the sort."

"Well; but here you are down in black and white."

"Then it is a mistake. It must be: we have had nothing at all of the kind."

Tom rang the bell, and when the waiter appeared, he inquired of him what it all meant.

"These, sir, the postboys have had," replied the waiter.

"The devil they have! What, the lot!" cried Tom.

"You told ~~them~~, I believe, sir, to order what they liked?"

"So I did; nor do I object to pay for what they've ordered. But I've four or five necks to look after. These varment must be drunk! Send the landlord in."

At this moment the carriage dashed up to the door, and Tom perceived, in an instant, that the fellows could scarcely keep their seats.

"I thought so," he cried; "I knew, of course, they couldn't stand this. But don't be alarmed. *I'll* cook it. Landlord," said he, as that person entered, "how came you to let these men have so much to drink?"

"Upon my word, sir, I didn't know it," replied the landlord; "nor did my missis. They had it while she was up-stairs with the ladies. Depend upon it, sir, if I'd been in the way, it shouldn't have happened on any account."

"They who supplied them," said Mildmay, angrily, "ought to be ashamed of themselves."

"They ought, sir," replied the landlord; "and they shall know it. I'm very, very sorry it occurred."

"Well," said Tom, "we must make the best of it. Have you two men to take us on to Gravesend?"

"Not that I can trust, sir. I find they've made *my* fellows nearly as bad as themselves."

"Well, have you a set of harness?"

"Yes, sir, complete."

"Then have it put on, and I'll take the tits in hand."

"Do, dear," said Georgiana; "yes, drive yourself, dear, and then we shall be safe."

"But the postboys," suggested the landlord, "how are they to be managed?"

"Oh! I'll manage them," replied Tom; "come with me. Now I'll tell you what it is," said he, addressing the postboys, "I've behaved well to you, and you've taken advantage of it by getting beastly drunk."

"We ain't drunk, sir," said one of them; "not to say drunk, only a little freshy: we can ride!"

"I know better," said Tom; "and I'll just tell you what I mean to do: I mean to drive on, and leave you to follow when you're sober."

"What, d'yer mean to take our osses, sir?"

"Yes; and if you say another word, I explain to your master what beasts you have been."

"All right, Jim," hiccoughed the younger of the two. "Gen'el-man's werry espekable trump. I don't *think* we can do it: I *don't* think we can, Jim!"

"I *know* that you can't!" cried Tom; "that's all about it. Where's the harness?" he added, turning to the landlord.

"I'll see about that, sir."

"Very well," said Tom. "Now then," he added, addressing the postboys, "come this way, will you?"

The fellows followed as well as they could, but they made a most extraordinary stagger of it; and when they reached the kitchen in which they had been drinking, they instantly dropped upon the seat and became insensible.

Of course, under these peculiar circumstances, Tom said nothing more to *them*. He paid the bill, gave his card, and having inquired which was the best inn in Gravesend, left word that they should put up there; and when the horses had been harnessed, and the ladies with Mildmay had entered the carriage, he mounted the box with an air and drove off.

He had not, however, driven far, before he pulled up suddenly, and Mildmay, on looking out to ascertain the cause, inquired what was the matter.

"I'm lonely," replied Tom; "that's about *it*. Can the petticoats spare you? *If* they can, come up here and have a cigar."

"I feared that something had happened," said Mildmay to the ladies.

"Oh!" exclaimed Georgiana, "when *he* is driving I am never afraid. He drives beautifully. If he had four wild horses he'd manage them, I believe. He has such a perfect mastery over them."

"Well, I suppose," said Mildmay, "I *can* be spared." And having opened the door he alighted.

"That's somewhere about it," said Tom; "come along. Here's a light, my boy! Now we shall cut away in comfort."

In less than forty minutes they were at Gravesend—for Tom



never allowed his "tits" to be sluggish—and having stopped at the principal inn, Mildmay assisted the ladies to alight, while Tom directed attention to the horses.

"A couple of varments," said he, "will come for 'em either to-night or to-morrow morning; but don't let 'em take 'em away till I see 'em, mind that."

"Very well, sir, I'll take care of that," said the ostler. "Give 'em a feed, sir, I suppose, sir?"

"Yes; and have 'em rubbed down well, and treated as if they was your own, of course."

Dinner was ordered at five; and in the interim Mildmay and Tom went out for a stroll. Mary had by this time completely recovered, and as she was more than an hour at her toilet, she looked on their return—that is to say, in her judgment—far more lovely than ever. Oh! she was in her own estimation a *dear*, and she really did glance and look archly at Mildmay—of course, in the strictest possible confidence—until he began to conceive her to be the most beautiful creature he ever beheld.

They had a most delicious dinner—almost everything that could be procured was produced—but not a single drop of champagne could Mary be prevailed upon to touch. She took sherry with some freedom, and port after dinner, and then drank two glasses of claret—although she didn't like it at all; but the sight of champagne being quite enough for her, she declared that she would not drink a glass for the world.

"Now then," said Tom, when the ladies had retired, Georgiana having intimated privately to him that in the room to which they were about to withdraw there was an excellent piano, "I'll tell you what it is, we're going to have some popular music when we go up to the petticoats; but, look you here: *before* we go I want to drink your jovial good health, but I *won't* do it, mind you, unless you consent to have one bottle of spicy mulled claret."

"With all my heart!" cried Mildmay, promptly. "Let us give the order at once."

Tom instantly rose and rang the bell, and when the waiter appeared the order was given.

"I'll tell you what it is, old fellow," said Tom, "I *like* you. There's no mistake about it—not a single mite! You don't know how *much* I like you. I'll bet ten to one you're a trump—every inch of you!—*and* nothing but—now look here: I go up to town to-morrow with George to see these swells about the tin; well, Polly shall have what I said, of course, but I shan't be content unless you promise, upon your honour, that if ever you *should* want a hundred or two, or even a thousand, you'll come to me. Will you promise?"

"I'll promise you this," replied Mildmay, "that if ever I *should* be in immediate want of money, you shall be the very first man to whom I'll apply."

"Very well, that's enough. Now, look here: next week, you know, George and I go to Newmarket. Very well. Now, can you come down there the week after next?"

"Yes; I at present know of nothing at all likely to prevent me!"

"Then, *will* you come? with Polly, of course!"

"I will."

"Very well; then that's settled. The governor's a rum 'un, but you won't mind that. Besides, you won't see much of him. I'll make you, old fellow, as happy as a bird! But I say, where's the claret?"

He again rang the bell, and when the claret had been brought, the health of Mildmay, Mary, Georgiana, Sarah, Tom, Tom's father, and Georgiana's aunt, was drunk with all the honours; and when with these toasts they had finished the claret, they wisely went up to the ladies.

After coffee, of course, music was introduced. Mildmay played and sang, Georgiana played and sang, and Tom wanted to sing, but Georgiana wouldn't let him! They spent, notwithstanding that, a most delightful evening, and early retired to rest.

At nine the next morning they all met to breakfast; but long before that the two postboys arrived bearing their saddles, and nearly worn out, having been by the landlord at Dartford compelled to walk from his house to Gravesend. He had threatened to inform their master of their conduct, unless they started at a time at which he knew they would meet with no vehicle of any description on the road, and as they had not been accustomed to walk far they came in completely knocked up.

Tom saw them as soon as he came down, and expostulated with them in *his* way; but that expostulation was immediately followed by an order for a good substantial breakfast for them, which they had and enjoyed while he was having his own.

His appointment in town was for two o'clock: he felt it necessary, therefore, to start at eleven, and having promised Mildmay—who at that hour conducted Georgiana to the carriage—that he and George would on the following day rejoin them, he ordered one of the postboys to sit by his side and the other to get up behind, and drove to Dartford, where the harness was changed and the horses were baited, and the postboys permitted to resume their functions, and thus, to the satisfaction of all concerned, they gaily proceeded to town.

## CHAPTER XIV

## MR. TODD'S INTRODUCTION TO GEORGIANA.

THE transfer of the twenty thousand pounds, to which Georgiana had become entitled, had no sooner been completed, than Tom sold out two thousand to begin with, and with it at once opened an account at the Bank.

The first cheque he drew was for five hundred pounds, and this he took down to Gravesend the following day, and presented to Mary, whose heart leapt with joy at the sight of a document so interesting! Oh, how she panted to get it cashed! How she longed to have five hundred sovereigns before her—to count them over and over again—to play with them—to pile them up—to build houses with them, and then to knock them down again. Five hundred *sovereigns*! Five *hundred* sovereigns! “Oh!” she exclaimed; “oh! what an enormity! What dresses I can have!—what bonnets I can buy!—what rings, what brooches, what feathers, what veils, what gloves, what beautiful handkerchiefs! Oh! what a lot of the loveliest things can be purchased for five hundred pounds! We shall never want money now, that’s quite clear. Good gracious *me*, though—five *hundred* pounds!”

Upon Mildmay this present had no other pleasing effect than that of affording an additional proof that Tom was a generous, kind-hearted fellow. *He* formed *no* projects in consequence. He smiled at Mary’s expressions of rapture, but almost wished that the cause had been withheld.

At Gravesend they passed the next three days, and then returned to town, when Tom purchased a brilliant currie and a pair of splendid greys, with harness of the most dashing character. He then purchased dresses of every description for Georgiana, and ordered coats and waistcoats of almost every conceivable cut and colour for himself—and when he felt that he was in a position to create an unexampled sensation, he, attended by two outriders, drove to Newmarket.

“*Year yer har—year yer come!*” cried a friend of his father’s, who was smoking his pipe as Tom dashed through the town. “*Cut away! Send I may live, though, that hain’t slappy p’raps! Why, who can he be?*”

“Eh!—what!—eh!” cried Todd, straining his eyes through the glass as Tom nodded; “*ha, ha, ha, ha!—ho, ho, ho, ho!—ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Now I’m happy. That’s the ticket! That’s the style! Bravo, bravo! Cut along!*”

“Why, what er yer hat!” exclaimed his friend, as Todd danced about the room in a state of ecstasy.

"Ha, ha, ha, *ha!*" continued Todd. "*That's* about it! Ha, ha, ha, *ha!*"

"Why, what do yer mean? Are you stark starin' mad? Who is it?"

"Tom! Ha, ha, *ha!* My boy Tom!"

"What one o' the houtriders?"

"One o' the *what!*" cried Todd, with contempt.

"Well, yer don't mean to say that that's him in the curricie?"

"Him in the curricie?—of *course!*"

"Yer don't mean *that!*"

"To be sure I do. That's him, I tell you, and that's his wife!"

"But they're gone right up to the Rutland."

"Of course! You don't think they'd stop here, do you?"

"Well, but I say though, come draw it a *leetle* mild!"

"That's him, I tell you, and nobody but—can't you believe me? Didn't you see him nod?"

"Well, but send I may live, can he come it like that?"

"Come it—ha, *ha!* There's no nob in nature can come it half like him. Did you ever see such a turn-out afore? Ain't it nobby? Ha, *ha!* Eh? Ain't it?"

"That, Tom," cried his friend, who felt perfectly bewildered; "leetle Tommy which used to be—which I've had on my knee in this year very bar—and which only the other day was a curly-headed kid? *Hare* you a-crammin' on me now, or hare you not?"

"Not—not a bit of it!"

"Then I'm stunned."

"Here he is! Here he comes! Look!" cried Todd, as he saw Tom approaching the house on foot; "that's him! Ha, ha, *ha!* What d'yer think now? I knew he wouldn't be long: I'd ha' bet ten to one of it. Look at the people looking at him—eh? Ha, ha, ha! Lord, how they wonders who he is. Ha, ha, *ha!* Now for it. What, Tommy!" he exclaimed, seizing the hand of Tom as he entered. "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, *ha!* My boy!" he added, in tones of emotion, dashing the tears from his eyes; "my boy!—I know I'm a fool, I know I am. Go and talk to Tomkins a little."

"Ah, my old swell!" cried Tom, turning to Tomkins as Todd left the bar, "how are you? Why, I haven't seen *you* for a variety of generations. How do you find yourself?"

"Hearty, sir, thank you," replied Tomkins, humbly.

"Why, what do you mean?" cried Tom; "ain't we friends?"

"I hope so, sir."

"What do you call me sir for?"

"You're a gen'elman now, and I never could speak to a gen'elman without."

"But what if I am a gentleman? What's the odds o' that? Do you think that makes a mite o' difference in *me*? Not a dust."

"Now, then, my boy," said Todd, rushing into the bar again with his eyes and nose particularly red; "now, then, what'll you have to take, you know? What'll you have to take?"

"Oh! open a bottle of sherry," said Tom. "But I say, what's the matter with Tomkins here? He's just about as cold as a cucumber."

"Oh, *he* ain't cold—he's only stunned! But, Tommy, I *say*, what a nobby turn-out! Oh! send I may *live*, ain't it slap!"

"Do you like it?"

"*Like* it! Does pigs like peas? Why, I never see nothin' in my life so howdacious!"

"I flatter myself it looks popular, rayther. But come, I say, let's have this sherry."

"Here, draw the cork, Tommy, come, there's a trump. As true as I'm alive, I can't stick the screw in."

"Lushington, lushington!" cried Tom.

"No, it ain't that; it's suffen else. Never mind what. But," he added, grasping his hand again, "I'm so glad to see you, Tommy!"

"*Will* you sit down," said Tom, "and make your life happy? There! Now then. Here, I'll get the glasses."

"I wish you good day, sir," said Tomkins. "I'm glad to see you well."

"What do you mean?" cried Tom; "what *do* you mean? If you don't sit down and have a glass of wine with us, blister *me* if ever I speak to you again."

"No, but I'm a intrudin'!"

"Sit down, I tell you, and don't be a fool."

"Now," said Todd; "now then—now, how's Georgianny?"

"Oh, spicy!"

"And she's a good 'un, Tommy, is she?"

"A good 'un! there ain't such an angel on this blessed earth, I'll bet a million!"

"God bless her!" cried Todd; "God bless her!"

"You saw her as we passed here, didn't you?"

"Well, I didn't see her face. I might ha' done, I know; but somehow or 'nother I didn't. I never see her face in my life. I shouldn't know her from Adam."

"Well, the first chance you'll have, you know, 'll be six o'clock, for she sends her love, and hopes you'll come up there to dinner."

"What! Now there's a job. Bless my heart alive, now, there's a misfortune. I've just given Polly leave to go to her aunt's to tea?"

"Is she gone?"

"No; but she's puttin' on her traps, and I shouldn't like, you know, to disappoint her."

"Well, but don't you think she'd rather have the whole day to-morrow?"

"Yes; I dessay she would."

"Well, then, tell her you'll give her the whole day to-morrow, or any other whole day she likes instead. Go and tell her at once. That'll suit her complaint as well, *I* know. You must come, you know. If you shut up the house, you must come. And now, old boy," he added, turning to Tomkins, as Todd left the bar, "come, let's have a glass of wine together. Success to you. If there's anything that *I* can do for you at any time, all you've got to do is to tell me, and I'll do it."

"Much obleedged to you," said Tomkins; "there's only one thing, if I might make bold to name it, and that is, if you *should* hear of a tidy sittiwation for my daughter I should be grateful."

"What sort of a girl is she?"

"One of the most genteelest, and a good girl, too, though I say it. She's a hout-and-hout hand at her needle. She's bin at a milliner's over two year, but they makes her stick at it sich a hawful lot of hours, that now she thinks she'd rayther have a tidy sittiwation."

"She's steady, you say?"

"As good a girl as ever drawed breath."

"And clever?"

"I back her, at her needle, against the world!"

"Very well; then look here—"

"All right, Tommy—*all* right!" exclaimed Todd, returning. "Polly says she didn't want much to go to-day, and she'd rather have a day another time."

"Of course," said Tom; "I knew she would. But look here: Tomkins has just been talking to me about his daughter, which wants a sittiwation. Now George wants a lady's-maid, I know, as the last she had has just got married—you'll see her next week with her husband here: *such* a spicy fellow—an author—a swell which'll beat the world! But as I was saying, George wants one, and as such, I'll recommend *her*."

"Tommy," said Todd, "do nothing of the sort."

"Why not?" cried Tomkins, indignantly.

"Why not! Don't you know nature better than that? Leave it to me. *I* can do it: he can't. Don't you think that if he was to recommend *her*, his wife would fancy he'd some other motive?"

"Oh ah, I see," said Tomkins; "ah, that's another thing!"

"But George," said Tom, "has no such rubbish in her."

"I don't say she has," replied Todd; "but they're all open to it. If there's any flesh alive as knows what women is, you know, it's me. No man must tell me what women is made of, I know it! I ain't lived all these years without knowin' that. You leave it to me, I tell you. I'll mention it to-night, and as I know she's a steady, industrious girl, I'll manage it—mark my words."

"Well, you know, I should be much obleedged if you would!"

"I'll do it, I tell you; so make up your mind easy."

"Well!" said Tom, "so be it. But of all the artful cards nature ever invented, *you* are the most out-and-out. Why, there's no more nonsense about my George than there is about an unborn baby."

"What! she's a woman, ain't she?"

"Rayther."

"Then, I know what women is. So that settles the pint."

"But you don't know what *she* is! However, as my only object is to serve Tomkins, have—as you always *must* have—your own way. And now I must start back, you know: she's alone. At six, you'll be there?"

"To a second. But have another glass!"

Tom had another glass, and then left them.

"Well!" cried Todd, "what do you think of him now?"

"Think!" returned Tomkins; "I don't know what to think. He's a gen'lman, every hinch of him—that's what *I* think!"

"I believe you. There ain't a nob in nature to beat him."

"I suppose he's very rich?"

"You said *rich*, didn't you? Why, he's worth a *mint* o' money!"

"Ah! How do, Mr. Todd?" said a person, who at that moment came to the bar.

"How do," returned Todd, somewhat distantly.

"A glass of ale, please."

"Polly, glass of ale!"

"There was a gentleman in here just now: do you know him?"

"Know him! Yes."

"Well, I fancied *I* knew him by sight. Who is he?"

"One which is just about as wide awake as you are—one which is not to be picked up exactly."

"Picked up? *I* don't want to pick him up!"

"No, I dessay you don't."

"I only thought that *I* knew him—that's all."

"You do know him—and he knows you! You see him drive in, I s'pose, didn't you?"

"It was that which excited my curiosity."

"Of course. *I* understand, you know, all about it. Flesh can't deceive me!"

"I don't want to deceive you!"

"No; I know you're very innercent. But it's no go!"

"Well! I asked a civil question, and I thought I should have a civil answer."

"You've got one; quite as civil a one as you'll get from *me*, and so that's all about it."

The individual said no more: he just sipped his ale and left the house.

"Now, you'll see he'll go up to the Rutland safe," said Todd.  
 "Mark my words if he don't."

"Who is he?" inquired Tomkins.

"What! don't you know—don't you know *Captain* Crock, as he's called, the picker up for the gamblin'-house over the way?"

"Is that Captain Crock?"

"That's the swell; but just as much a captain as I am. There you are—there he goes! Didn't I tell you so? I knew what he wanted as well as he could tell me. Now, he'll get hold of one of the waiters, or one o' Tom's grooms, p'raps, and then try and get hold of Tom."

"Well, you'd better put 'im hup to it."

"Oh! he's up to it. He's wide awake. I didn't bring him up with his eyes shet exactly."

"No; but a caution mightn't be much amiss."

"Oh, I'll walk a word or two into his ear! But now I say, Polly—come, my lass, look alive. A clean shirt, you know, and a nice clean neckcloth, and my best blue coat and white waistcoat, and them there black smalls, you know: get 'em all out."

"Top-boots or gaiters?" inquired Polly.

"Top-boots, of course."

"Why don't you be a nob at once," cried Tomkins, "and have a pair of black silk stockin's to go in?"

"Black silk stockin's! I ain't got none. I never had a pair in my life!"

"You can get a pair, can't you?"

"What'll they stand me in?"

"Oh, not much! But what's the hodd's to you?"

"But shan't I look a guy?"

"Not a bit of it. Jist the very kick! You don't ought to go in tops now yer son is sich a gen'elman. Have a pair, and look a leetle matters like his father."

"Well, I won't be beat. Take a sov, Polly, and go and get a pair. You know my size? Black silk stockin's at my time o' life! Who'd ever o' thought o' seein' me in silk stockin's! Well, it can't be said that afore he died Tim didn't sport a pair o' silk stockin's. Cut away, Polly, and tell Joe to get them there thin shoes o' mine and polish 'em up like glass."

Polly conveyed these instructions to Joe, and then went out for the stockings.

"Well, but I say," observed Tomkins, "ain't you never seen your darter-in-lor at all?"

"No, never: not her face; but I understand she's out-and-out handsome."

"Well, you *won't* forget to mention my girl to her?"



"Not a bit of it! Leave that to me. I *know* I'm right in what I said; don't you think so now yourself?"

"Right! you're always right, somehow or 'nother. I don't know how it is, but I never know'd yer wrong."

"If there's any flesh as knows things, it's *me*! Eh? Rayther. But come: there's the wine, you know! Help yourself. You're as welcome as a prince. Well!" he cried, when Polly returned, "have you got 'em? Here, let's have a look. Here you are. What's the damage?"

"Sixteen shillings," replied Polly.

"What! send I may live though! sixteen bob for a pair of stockin's. wonder what the Emperor of Roosher pays for his'n? Well, never mind, Tom can have 'em when I'm gone; so it'll be all the same in the long run."

"Well, yer know, I shan't go till I see yer turn-out," cried Tomkins.

"No don't, I shan't be long," said Todd, who immediately went up to dress.

It was then half-past five. He had consequently but half an hour to improve the characteristic respectability of his appearance; still, notwithstanding, his stockings—at which he kept continually glancing when they were on—to a great extent impeded his progress; he completed his toilet in time, and came down with the strut of conscious dignity.

"*Now*, what do I look like?" he cried. "Eh? What do I look like now?"

"Why, you look for hall the world like a banker," said Tomkins.

"I never seed nobody look more like one."

"Twig the stockin's, don't you—eh? Rayther. But time's up. Tat-ta. I shall see you to-night, p'raps. I shan't be late."

"I'll be here. You won't forget me?"

"Not to your knowledge. Now, Polly, look out. You know where I am, but I'm to be sent for for no mortal flesh."

On his arrival at the Rutland Arms, Georgiana received him most warmly. She took both his hands, and expressed the utmost pleasure, and really felt very glad to see him.

"He's a rum 'un to look at, George, ain't he?" said Tom.

"I know who's a *beauty* to look at," returned Todd, retaining still the hands of Georgiana, and looking at her with an expression of admiration. Tommy *told* me you was handsome," he added, "but *handsome* ain't half it. I can't be off kissing of you. Bless your pretty face! you do look so out-and-out beautiful!"

"Bravo!" cried Tom. "Do you call that nothing."

"I perceive," said Georgiana, with a smile, "that *you* know how to flatter as well as Tom."

"There ain't a mite of flattery in that," replied Todd. "There

you are—the thing speaks for itself. I'll back them eyes against mortal flesh, and them lips and cheeks too, and I don't care who knows it!"

"Hallo!" cried Tom; "I say, governor, why where did you get them there silks? Send I may live!—Eh? *Rayther.*"

"Tom, dear, Tom!" said Georgiana. "I hope you do not mind him?" she added, with a smile. "He is such a sad fellow to make observations."

"Oh! I don't mind him," said Todd, "not a mite. He is, as you say, a sad fellow. He was one of the seventh wonders of the world!—*he* was, when he was a kid. Flesh couldn't do nothing with him. However I brought him to perfection I can't think. But now I must leave *you* to keep him in order. But lor!" he added, "I can't help looking at you. Tommy, you *dog*, if you ain't a happy fellow, you ought to be, that's all. And *don't* I like to hear you talk!"

"You should hear her sing," cried Tom. "You'd fancy yourself among the angels."

"I did once," said Todd, with emotion. "Yes—I *did* once—the Sunday after your dear little sister died. God bless her! Oh!" he added, turning to Georgiana, "she was so like you! I went to church—I remember it as if it was but yesterday—and as the children were singing a hymn, I fancied the angels came down to join them. I heard her voice!—I knew it was hers!—and I felt that she had been taken to heaven."

Tears instantly sprang into Georgiana's eyes, and Tom went to the window, as his father, with half-choked utterance, continued—

"Oh! how I *loved* her none can tell. She was so pure, so meek, so beautiful! You are the image of what she *would* have been; and if the whole world—if ten *thousand* worlds had been placed at my foot, I wouldn't have lost her for them! But God knows best. He took her from me for some wise end, and she is happy—happy."

"Has *my* papa such feelings as these?" thought Georgiana, while she wept. "Am I—*am* I as dear to him?"

"Don't let me make you unhappy," said Todd; "but you do look so like *her*, that it all came into my mind again. I couldn't—couldn't help it. Tom," he added, "when you look here, think of your sister. If you treat her harsh, or say an unkind word to her, you and I cuts it. I'll never, *never* speak to you again."

Tom was silent. He remembered his little sister, and, as the tears were rolling down his cheeks, he kept his station at the window until dinner was announced, when they all endeavoured to assume an air of gaiety.

It is questionable whether the most gentlemanly bearing, the most polished manners, or the most brilliant eloquence, *could* have won the heart of Georgiana so completely as did the simple unaffected words of Todd. They went at once to her heart's core; and, although

they gave her pain, inspiring, as they did, the conviction that the general had no such affection for her as that which Todd had had for *his* child, they had the effect of creating deep feelings of esteem, if not indeed those of veneration.

Oh! how attentive she was to him at dinner, which—having in his early days waited at table—he knew how to eat as well as most men; and when the cloth was cleared she drew nearer to him, while he contemplated *her* with mingled feelings of love and pride.

“Do you want a maid?” he inquired at length.

“If you do,” interposed Tom, “why—”

“You hold your tongue. Do you want such a thing as a lady’s-maid?”

“Why, at present,” replied Georgiana, “I have no attendant at all!”

“I know of one which’ll answer your purpose: she ain’t been out afore: but she’s a *good* girl, industrious and steady, and out-and-out clever at her needle. She’s been at a milliner’s over two year, and there’s no vice about her.”

“Then,” replied Georgiana, “she is just the very person I want. You know her, of course, well?”

“I’ve known her from childhood; she ain’t twenty yet.”

“Then I wish you would do me the favour to engage her.”

“Hadn’t you better see her first; I know you’ll like her; but you’ll see. I’ll send her over in the morning?”

“Do so, please; I shall be happy to engage any one who has your good opinion.”

“And now, Tommy, what do you mean to do? Do you mean to take a house down here, or how?”

“Oh, I don’t know; I’ll leave it entirely to George.”

“I should certainly like to live here,” said Georgiana, “for you live here; and although I cannot hope to be received at the Hall, I shall have the satisfaction at least of knowing that my dear, dear parents are near me.”

“Have you written to ‘em?”

“Oh, yes, frequently.”

“Ay, well; that’s right. And what do they say?”

“Nothing—unhappily nothing. The first letter they opened and returned; all the rest have been returned unopened.”

“Ah, well, don’t distress yourself; you and I’ll talk over this another time. We understand each other now, and *we’ll* manage it between us. *We’ll* do it, if the general has a heart at all. But now, touching this house, if you mean to settle here, we’d better look out for one, at once.”

“We do not want a large one,” observed Georgiana.

“No,” said Tom, “but we *must* have one a *little* near the mark.”

“Of course, Tommy, of course—and it strikes me I’ve got one

now in my eye which'll be the very thing. It ain't above fifty a year, I should say, but it's just by the roadside, with coach-house and stables, and all complete."

"Is there a garden?" inquired Georgiana.

"A capital garden. Grows cabbages, salary, taters; anything you like. It is, in fact, the most compact little box you ever saw, and so you'll say when you see it. We'll go and look at it to-morrow mornin', shall we?"

"I should like to see it much."

"It's no use, you know, throwin' money away here; you may just as well throw it in the gutter. If you've any to spare, there's always lots o' poor people to be found which'll be very thankful for it, and I know very well, by the look of you, you'd much rayther give it to them than support a lot o' greedy and ungrateful cubs, which'll rob you and look you in the face."

"I s'pose it's an out-and-out expensive crib this," said Tom, "ain't it?"

"Rayther!—you'll know it, Tommy, if you stop here long; but all inns is expensive; there ain't one which ain't."

"I know what inns are. A man ought to have a mint to live in 'em. I shall never forget the sight of money they charged me at Malvern, you know, George, when I went down there the first time; oh, stunning. They seemed as if they didn't know how to charge enough."

"That's just what I say," cried Todd. "If even you stop down here only six months, you'd better get into a house as soon as possible."

"I perfectly agree with you," observed Georgiana. "We should have our own home and our own servants."

"Exactly," said Todd, "and have everything comfortable about you. That's just my sentiments; ain't they yours, Tommy?"

"To a hair," replied Tom. "We'll go and look at this crib in the morning. And now, George, I wish you'd give the governor a little music. There is a piano, you know, in the other room."

"Not to-night," said Todd; "another time—another time."

"I will do so with pleasure," observed Georgiana.

"I know, dear—I know it—I know you would; but you must feel tired. Sixty miles is no joke. Besides, I'm *very* happy now, and if you begin to sing, I know how it'll be."

"Are you fond of music?"

"Monstrous fond. I used to play the fiddle *myself* at one time! and played it too as well as there's here and there one. And the very first present I mean to make you will be the spiciest and popularist peahanner mortal flesh ever played on. It *shall* be a beauty! Just get into a house of your own, and you'll find me

as good as my word. And now," he added, "it's time for me to go."

"Why, it's nothing at all o'clock yet," cried Tom.

"Oh, yes it is, my boy—oh, yes it is!"

"Oh, stop another hour with us!"

"Not to-night. The sooner you're both in bed the better, I know."

"Indeed," said Georgiana, "I do not feel at all fatigued."

"Bless your pretty tongue," said Todd, taking her hand, "I don't think you know how I love you!"

"Well," said Tom, "if you're determined to go I'll see you home, at all events."

"Not a bit of it. What for?"

"Oh, I *want* to stretch my legs!"

"Yes do, dear, do," said Georgiana.

"Why, I haven't got to go above five hundred yards."

"Well, but I want to speak to you. I want to say something particular."

"Do let him go," said Georgiana.

"Well, if *you* wish it, he shall. But he shan't stop. I won't let him stop! *God* bless you. *Good* night. You've made me so happy. You don't know *how* happy you've made me."

"We shall see you in the morning?"

"Safe, dear, safe! *Good* night. *Good* night."

"Well," said Tom, on leaving the inn, "what do you think of her?"

"Think of her! What do I *think* of her! Don't ask me. Don't say a word about it. Don't *mention* it. She's an angel. Oh, Tommy, what a likeness there is between her and your dear little sister! It's a good thing your poor mother ain't alive now, for if *she'd* seen her she'd ha' gone raving *mad*!"

"Well, it's often struck me she was very much like *some* one."

"She's the very *picture* of her. I saw it at once. When I first went into the room I could hardly believe my own eyes."

"Well, but isn't she besides that a dear little soul?"

"She's an out-and-outer, Tommy, and no mistake about it! She's all the heart of a man can wish—and if the general *don't* forgive her, he's neither a father nor a man."

They now reached the house, and as they entered the bar, Tomkins, who had been waiting with the utmost impatience, looked at them with an expression of intense anxiety.

"It's all right, old boy," said Todd.

"His it though? His it?" cried Tomkins, eagerly.

"Yes; it's all settled. *She's* safe. Let her go up in the mornin', and she'll have an angel for her missis—an angel!"

"Oh," cried Tomkins, seizing his hand, "how grateful I ham, you don't know how very much obleedged to yer I feel."

"Not a bit of it. He which does good when he can, is paid by his own feelin's. He which doesn't when he can, ain't fit to live. So don't say another word about it. If you want such a thing as a few pounds, you know, to rig her out, you can have it, that's all."

This was too much for Tomkins; tears of gratitude instantly started from his eyes, and he experienced much difficulty in exclaiming, "I shall *never* forget it."

"Now then, old fellow," cried Tom, "this won't do, you know. Send I may live, we've had tears enough at the Rutland for *one* night! Come, let's have some brandy-and-water."

"*One* glass, you know, Tommy—*one* glass!" cried Todd.

"Well, let's have it then. Polly! you know how to cook it!—one for me, one for Tomkins, and one for the swell in the silk stockings."

"He looks well in 'em, don't he?" said Tomkins.

"Rayther. There's a little popularity about 'em. I never *saw* him turn out in such a state of mind before. How long have you sported 'em?"

"Only to-day," replied Todd; "Polly went out and bought 'em."

"Oh then, *she* put you up to it, did she?"

"No, Tomkins."

"Then he has, you know, what George calls *taste*! Well, it ain't a bad leg after all: the shape of it's none so dusty."

"Oh!" cried Todd, recollecting himself, "I knew I'd got something to tell you! You know that scamp, which they call Captain Crock, Tommy, don't you?"

"Crock—Crock—Crock—Captain Crock!" said Tom; "I've heard the name."

"The picker up, you know, for the gamblin'-house."

"Oh! *that* swell. Oh! I know him."

"Well, he's been after *you*."

"After me? Why what does he want with me?"

"What does he ever want, but to pick up swells which has got lots o' tin to be robbed on!"

"Well, he don't pick up me; so that's no go. *Not* exactly. Not to his knowledge. There's one thing I've made up my mind to, governor—firm—and that's this: wherever I may go, and *what-ever* I may do, I'll never set foot in a gambling-house."

"That's right, Tommy—stick to that."

"I mean it."

"If you do, you know, you're *safe* to be robbed!"

"I know it."

"And that ain't all. Them which plays at these places, all'a's

has their nature's changed. However right, you know, they might ha' been before, it all'a's makes 'em bad husbands, bad fathers, bad friends, bad everything, which makes up bad men."

"I know all about it. I've made up my mind, and no flesh alive shall ever tempt me to do it. As for this captain—how much—eh? What's his name?—Crock. If he tries it on with me, you know, I'll kick him."

"Well, I knew you was too wide awake for *that*, Tommy."

"I should think so."

"I told him so, plump at once. Didn't I, Tomkins?"

"Yes," replied Tomkins; "and didn't make no bones about it!"

"Why, when did you see him?" inquired Tom.

"He came in just after you left here, and called for a glass of ale—which he merely put his lips to: them devils never drink; they're too artful for that—and then wanted to know if I knew who you was. I up at once and told him it wasn't no go. I *says*, says I, you know him, and he knows *you*, so it ain't a mite o' use at all a tryin' on it on. So he cut it, and then went right up to the Rutland, to get hold of one of the waiters, of course. But come, Tommy, come," he added; "think o' Georgianny!"

"Oh, I ain't been here no time yet!"

"All alone, you know—not a soul to speak to—there she is, sittin', you know, mopin' by herself."

"Not a bit of it. I know jovial well what she's after: she's playing and singing, I'll bet ten to one. She was down to the piano before we reached here, and there she is now, you may take your oath of that."

"Well, but you know I *promised* I wouldn't keep you long. Don't you remember I said 'He shan't stop'?"

"Well, I'll be off almost directly. I must finish this."

"Well, then, finish it at once. Come, for my sake as well as for hers. You want me to be all right there, don't you?"

"No flesh can be more right than you are there, I know."

"Then let's keep all right, Tommy! Come!"

"You're a slave driver, send I may live if you ain't. It's all owing to them black silk stockings. However, good night! I shall see you in the morning, of course. Good night, Tomkins: good night."

He then left the house, and returned to Georgiana, who, in the warmest terms, expressed her admiration of Todd.

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE FIRST OUTRAGE.

As Georgiana was perfectly delighted with the house to which Todd conducted her and Tom the next morning, they engaged it at once, and in less than a week it was chastely and elegantly furnished.

For the first time since her marriage, Georgiana now felt quite at home. She went about with more freedom: the house was her own: everything about it was so convenient, so unique, and, as she conceived her servants—the whole of whom had been recommended by Todd, whose patronage had now become extensive—to be the best servants in the world, she wanted nothing but her father's forgiveness to render her perfectly happy, while the consciousness of being the absolute master of such an establishment, inspired Tom with no inconsiderable importance.

"I say, governor, look here," said he, when all had been completed; "now, I'll tell you what it is, you must cut your crib."

"What do you mean, Tommy, eh? What do you mean?"

"Why, I mean you must think about giving up business!"

"What, and crawl about the earth with my hands in my pockets, and nothing at all in the world to do!"

"What do you want to do? You've done the trick! What more do you want? At your time o' life, what *can* you want to do? Sell off, and set up a gentleman!"

"Well, but how am I to manage to get rid o' my time?"

"How does other swells do? Get rid of it here. *I'll* undertake to amuse you for the present: when the kids come to town, *George'll* find you a job. Give up, I tell you; what do you want to slave for, now?"

"But the notion, Tommy; look at the *notion* of my retirin' from business."

"Sittivated as I am now, you don't ought to be in business. It don't look respectable: it don't sound respectable: it *ain't* respectable: and that's all about it. Here am I here, living right up to the mark, and there are you keeping a public-house. It ain't the thing: it ain't a mite like the thing, so you'd better retire at once. You've got enough to live on, I jovial well know, and if you ain't, you know, I've enough for you!"

"It's true, Tommy, very true, I've got enough to live on: I've more than enough: besides myself, no flesh knows what I've got. I've made money quiet but fast, and never wronged nobody yet of a penny. I *have* got enough, and over enough, and, now you're per-  
vided for, Tommy, I ain't got that spur to keep on I had afore;



but for all this, and all that, Tommy, I *can't* think of giving up business. I've been in it so many years, and it has, at length, become so natural to me, that if I was out of it, send I may live if I think I should be here long !”

“What, a man of your build and constitution !”

“I know I'm as strong as I ever was, and stronger. But still, for all that, if I'd nothin' to do, I should be like a fish out of water ; I might struggle a little, and gasp for a time, but all would soon be over.”

“If you'd nothing to do ! Why, what do you do, now ? You get up in the morning, and mount your pipe, and then have breakfast, and mount it again ; and then have dinner, and puff away till tea-time, and then blow a cloud till you go to bed. If you can't do as much as this *out* of business, why, it's a rum thing to me. That pipe is continually in your blessed gills, and you're as continually in your easy-chair. Talk of doing, Polly does all ; you do nothing. Don't you *think*, now, if you was to give up at once, you'd be able to manage to do as much as that ? besides, you've made money, you say ; and you're making money now. Very well. Now look here—now just look at it serious—don't you deprive somebody else of what you're making, and which would be very glad of it, by sticking there, when you don't care about it, eh ; when you've got enough, and don't want more ?”

“A thought strikes me,” said Todd. “Now hold hard a bit. Polly's been a good girl. You're right when you say she does almost all the work. Very well. She's got a sweetheart—young Meadows, which you and I've known from a kid. Now, he ain't a pound to bless himself with, because he's got a mother and a sister to support : but he's very stiddy, and very industrious ; he's one of the hardest workin' fellows I know, and they're only a waitin' for my consent, because she says she won't do it without. Now look here, what I was thinking of was this : if I was to tell 'em to marry at once, and give the house up to 'em just as it is, I should not only make *them* happy, but I should be able to go when I liked, and put 'em up to a thing or two, and see that the business was going on right, and feel just as much at home in the bar then as ever.”

“Of course you would !” cried Tom ; “the very thing. You'll be happier for it, and live longer for it, because you'll take more exercise.”

“Well, I shall see. I'll turn the matter over. I don't like to be too fast ; I shall see.”

“I *know* you'll be happier living with us—”

“No, no, Tommy ; that sort o' thing never does. I shouldn't live *with* you : I should build a house *near* you.”

“Well, that you can do as you like about ; only *don't* stick in that crib. And now look here : Mildmay, you know, which I told you about, is coming down here with his wife to-day. Very well. Now, I want you to meet 'em—I want you to dine with 'em here at six.”

"Now, I'll tell you what, Tommy, once for all. I don't like dinners at six. I get up at six, and that's just twelve hours. It's all very well, you know, for them which gets up at eleven : it's all very well too for you, which eats a little more for lunch than I do for dinner : you may manage to wait till six ; but if, Tommy, you can't dine before six, I shan't very often dine with you, that's all."

"Well, we'll arrange that, you know, when we get settled : but we can't dine before six to-day, you know : the coach don't come in before half-past four."

"Very well, then I'll come. I was only a speakin' of the general way. I'll be here."

"He's a slap-up fellow, I think I *told* you : so you needn't, you know, let out *much*."

"Tommy, don't fret yourself at all about that. When I speaks to a gentleman, I speaks to a gentleman, and there ain't no mistake at all about it. Still, no flesh can frighten me ; I shouldn't mind speakin' before the greatest nob alive !"

"No, I know ! I only *said*, you know—"

"All right, Tommy. *I'll* be up to the mark. But if he's the swell Georgiana describes, I shall like him, I know. *I'll* be there."

"Then you'll not forget what we've been talking about ?"

"All right. *I'll* turn it over in my mind. I think I see my way pretty clear even now."

At half-past four, Mildmay and Mary arrived, and looked about with expressions of admiration. Mary had never in all her days, she declared, seen so charming, so lovely a place. Oh ! it was in her view a *dear* of a house ! She only wished that she and William had one just like it. She was sure she should never be happy again in London : she was *sure* she never should—a nasty, filthy, smoky hole !—and yet it was lovely to go to the theatre, and sit in the boxes full dressed ! Still that was the house after all for her, and if she could find one like it, *near* London, she'd never let her William *rest* till he took it !

Todd was punctual ; and on being introduced to Mildmay, observed that he had heard a very capital account of him, and moreover liked his appearance much.

Mildmay, of course, appreciated this, and they sat down to dinner, and afterwards spent an agreeable evening ; the only thing which at all excited any other feelings than those of pleasure, being the fact that Mary, having thrown off all restraint, rattled away in the most extraordinary style imaginable.

In the morning it was arranged they should go for a ride, that Mildmay should accompany Georgiana on horseback, while Tom and Mary occupied the curriole. The horses were therefore immediately ordered, and when the ladies were dressed,—Georgiana, of course, in her usual habit, but Mary with frills, flowers, feathers and flounces, and ribbons flying about in all directions,—they started.

And then, didn't Mary run on! Oh! how delightful it was to ride in a curriple! She should never be happy till William bought one! She was *sure* she never should, and she'd never let him rest till he *did*! What *could* be so lovely!—what could look so grand! She'd have one before she was many months older, or else she'd know the reason why!

"Don't you think George rides elegant?" inquired Tom.

"Oh, she does indeed!" returned Mary. "Oh, lovely! I only wish I could ride as well. That's the *only* thing I want to learn, and I will learn too; and when I do, I'll make William buy me a *beautiful* horse, for I'll never let him rest till he does."

They were now going slowly along: indeed the horses were but walking; and Mildmay and Georgiana, side by side, were some two or three hundred yards a-head. They were conversing at the time somewhat gaily; but they had no sooner passed a cross-road on the left, than Georgiana heard the word "Baggage" pronounced, and immediately received a severe cut across her shoulders.

"*Scoundrel!*" cried Mildmay; "cowardly, unmanly *scoundrel!*" and dashing up to him who had committed the outrage, instantly struck him from his horse.

"My father!" exclaimed Georgiana. "My father! *oh!* do not injure my father!"

On the instant, Tom made his horses *fly* to the spot, and having pulled them back upon their haunches, alighted.

"The general!" he exclaimed, as Mildmay turned to support Georgiana.

"Villain, robber, low-bred *dog!*" cried the general, foaming with rage: "how *dare* you look me in the face?"

"How dare I look you in the face! I dare look any man alive in the face, and *hit* him in the face, if he lays a single finger upon her. You are her father: it's well for you that you are, for if you were *not*, I'd half strangle you. I care nothing about your big looks! They don't alarm me. You've *struck* her!—struck her, like a coward as you are! Will you strike *me*? No!—*no!* My blood *boils* when I look at you and think that you are her father!"

With the most supreme expression of contempt, the general, whose horse had started off wildly, walked away; when Tom, who perceived that Georgiana had fainted, ran up, and having lifted her into the curriple, drove to a cottage hard by, into which she was immediately borne, and there attended with the most affectionate solicitude until consciousness returned.

"My father," were the first words she uttered; "oh, have you injured my father?"

"No," replied Tom; "not at all."

"Thank Heaven!" she exclaimed; "thank Heaven!"

"If he had been injured," cried Mary, "it would have served

him just right, for I never in all my born days heard of anything so shameful. I only wish, for his sake, I had been a man, that's all. I'd have made him remember it—the brute!”

“Hush, my dear Mary; hush, hush!” said Mildmay.

“What, do *you* take his part, then? Do you think it right—”

“Nay, nay, I do not take his part, nor do I think it right, that—”

“Oh, don't tell me! If I'd been a man I'd have scratched his very eyes out, the beast, I would!”

“Mary, Mary.”

“The nasty cowardly—”

“Do not be absurd, my dear—*do* not be absurd.”

“Do you mean to say, then, that it wasn't a nasty cowardly action?”

“No, no; but you really should consider the feelings of Mrs. Todd.”

“Did *he* consider her feelings, poor dear? Did he care—”

“But *you* ought to do so.”

“Well, if you'll stick up for a man like *that*—”

“Now Mary, my dear, let me beg of you to be silent.”

“What there is in *him*—a nasty, great, raw-boned, black-looking—”

“*Mary!*” cried Mildmay, sternly; and Mary immediately burst into tears. “Come, come,” he added, soothingly, “I did not intend to wound your feelings.”

“You don't care a bit *about* my feelings,” sobbed Mary.

“You wrong me, Mary; but come, let us say no more about it.”

“I don't *like* to be spoken to as if you was going to bite my head off; and, another thing is, I won't put up with it.”

“Come, come, come, I spoke somewhat harshly, I know, but—there, now let's forget it.”

Georgiana had by this time sufficiently recovered to leave the cottage, and when Tom had given the widow, by whom it was occupied, a substantial proof of his appreciation of the kindness she had displayed, they proceeded towards home: Mildmay having Georgiana's horse in hand, while she rode between Mary and Tom.

They had then about two miles to go—a distance which in less than ten minutes they accomplished; but they had no sooner reached the gate, than Todd, who saw the horse led by Mildmay, rushed out of the house, exclaiming, vehemently, “She has been thrown!”

“All right,” said Tom; “all right, all right.”

“I know better, Tommy: you can't deceive me,” cried Todd, anxiously; “what's amiss? what has happened? Tell me at once.”

“George fainted,” replied Tom; “George fainted. I'll tell you all about it by-and-by.”

“And fell—fainted and fell.”

"No, no," cried Tom, "I lifted her off."

"My dear," said Todd, taking the hand of Georgiana, who wept bitterly, "what's the matter? Oh, what's the matter?"

"My father," returned Georgiana; "we saw my father."

"Is that all? Oh! come along—come along. Here, take my arm. Oh! never mind that, so long as there's no bones broke I don't *care*! Come, my pretty one, cheer up."

Georgiana still wept as he led her in; and as she sank upon the sofa she exclaimed, "*He* is injured—I know that *he* is injured!"

"He? Who? Your father? How?"

"Why, look here, governor," said Tom, "look here: as George and Mildmay were riding together, the general came up to 'em unawares and called her 'a baggage,' and struck her with his whip, when Mildmay, who didn't know him from Adam, instantly knocked him off his horse."

"Tut, tut, tut, tut! God bless my soul!" cried Todd. "*Oh* dear, oh dear, oh dear, oh dear. *Oh* dear, oh dear, oh dear, oh dear. What a job, what a job, what a job, what a job. I wouldn't have had it happened for a thousand pound! Knocked him off! Oh, that upsets all. I don't blame you, Mr. Mildmay—I don't blame you—you acted like a man—but oh! what a job, what a job, what a job!"

"Had I known him," observed Mildmay, "I should certainly have pursued a very different course."

"I know, I know, I know," said Todd; "but was he really hurt?"

"Not at all," cried Tom.

"Well, that's a blessing."

"He went off as clear as a whistle," pursued Tom; "I never see a fellow go off much clearer. But when he got up again all was right. There's one thing, he had to walk home—his *horse* bolted."

"A chesnut."

"Yes."

"I saw it! I saw it pass here half an hour ago. I knew there was suffen amiss by that."

"Which way did it go?"

"Toward the town," replied Todd, "as hard as ever it could pelt."

"Then let him follow it," muttered Tom, and seated himself by the side of Georgiana.

"*Wasn't* it abominable treatment, Mr. Todd?" said Mary; "*don't* you think he ought to be ashamed of himself? *Wasn't* it a cowardly action?"

"It was anything but a *manly* action," returned Todd.

"I knew you'd say so; and yet there's men who'll stick up for a brute like that."

Mildmay looked at her with very great significance.

"I don't care a pin," she continued; "I will say, and stick to it too, that he hadn't the least right to strike her at all!"

"My dear lady," said Todd, of whom Mary was *not* a great favourite, "no one says that he had. I am sorry it occurred, because I fear that the breach, which was wide enough before, has been thus made still wider! but no one attempts to say he acted like a man. Now I'll tell you what it is, Tommy: I'll tell you what strikes me as being the best thing that can be done: you and me'll go and look after this horse. I dessay we shall find it, and if we do, I'll take it over myself to the Hall, and see if I can't pacify the general. It'll be a good excuse for me to go and have a talk with him, and if I don't change him in less than ten minutes, I'll undertake to forfeit my life."

"What, do you think," said Tom, "you can make any impression upon him to-day?"

"I'll bet ten to one I do. I'll bet fifty to one! Only just let me find this here horse of his—that's all! If I don't show him what a father's feelings *ought* to be, my name ain't what it is. Come along, Tommy: there's nothing like strikin' the iron while it's hot. That's my maxim, and has been through life; and I know it's a good one—I know it is. Such a chance as this don't happen *every* day in the week. And as for you," he added, taking Georgiana's hand affectionately, "make your mind easy; leave the whole thing to me—I'll do it; I know I can—I *know* it. Expect some news which'll gladden your heart, and make them pretty eyes of yours sparkle like stars. I shan't be long; I'll be back as soon as possible."

"Shall I go with you?" said Mildmay.

"Why, Tom knows the horse," replied Todd; "and, as such, I think he'd better go. He'll be back, of course, almost directly. Come along, Tommy, come along, my boy. Out of evil comes good, as the old sayin' is. I think I see my way now as clear as crystal."

He and Tom accordingly started towards Newmarket; but before they reached the town, they saw a man at a distance leading the horse, which Tom instantly recognised.

"There you are!" he exclaimed; "that's it, I'll bet a million."

"Wasn't I right, Tommy? wasn't I right?" cried Todd, triumphantly. "Didn't I say so? I knew we should find it—I *knew* it. Come along."

Having walked for some time at a most rapid rate, Tom shouted to the man, who at length heard him, and turned.

"Where did you stop him?" he inquired, as they approached.

"On the road to Milton Hall," replied the man.

"Well, he's had a good sweating; but that don't matter. Here's half-a-crown for you; get something to drink."

The man took the money and gave up the horse, which Tom then led into the town.

"Now," said Todd, "I'll just get the old mare saddled, and start off at once. It's lucky we found him, though, ain't it? But, lor, I knew we should—I knew it!"

Having ordered the horse to be rubbed down, and the mare to be saddled, he and Tom entered the house for the purpose of having a glass of sherry; but while they were conversing on the subject in the bar, the general, followed by two men, rushed in, and, with the expression of a fiend, exclaimed: "There are your prisoners! I charge them with having stolen my horse! As horse-stealers, therefore, secure them."

"What!" cried Tom, indignantly.

"Silence!—you *dog*!" returned the general. "Officers, do your duty. You know what I told you. Let them escape at your peril!"

"Escape!" cried Todd. "General! are you mad?"

"Secure them!" repeated the general, in tones of thunder; and before they had time even to think of resistance, Todd and his father were handcuffed together.

"What!" exclaimed Todd. "What—what's this? Oh! good God! is it possible!"

"Away with them!" shouted the general; and, in spite of their struggles and expostulations, the officers, by whom they were unknown, immediately seized their unmanacled wrists, and dragged them through the town.

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## [ CHAPTER XVI.

### THE EXAMINATION.

HAD an electric telegraph been at that particular period of the world's history established at Newmarket expressly for the purpose of communicating to all around the fact of Tom and his father having been seized by two officers, manacled, and dragged through the town, the intelligence could not have travelled with greater rapidity than it did. It flew from shop to shop with the velocity of thought, and as every communicant improved upon the text by adding his own peculiar conceptions, it soon became exceedingly questionable whether the prisoners had committed burglary, perjury, forgery, or murder. The sensation created was immense. Nothing in Newmarket ever surpassed it! There were, indeed, some few omniscient individuals who *knew* how it would be—who knew that it couldn't last long—who knew it to be a mere flash in the pan—who *knew* that the pri

soners had been engaged in a most extensive swindle, which had been providentially discovered in time, and, therefore, didn't wonder at it; but with the exception of these "knowing" men, the inhabitants were perfectly astounded.

Having arrived at the magistrate's residence, to which they had been followed by a crowd of grooms, stable-boys, and jockeys, whose amazement rendered them comparatively dumb, Tom and his father were ordered to wait with the officers in the hall, while the general had an interview with the magistrate in private. Here Todd, who felt the degradation deeply, could not refrain from shedding tears; but Tom, whose indignation was unbounded, assailed the officers fiercely, and in no liquid language denounced them as cowards, brutes, wretches, and slaves. In vain they repeatedly pleaded their duty; Tom, who conceived it to be the duty of no man to act with brutality, spurned the plea with an expression of bitter contempt.

At length they were summoned into the presence of the magistrate, who, with the general on his right, sat with an air of vast importance. He was not only a magistrate but a clergyman, and, moreover, a short stumpy man, whose cheeks hung like a couple of bags over his neck-cloth.

"Now," said he, in a deep fat voice, and precisely as if he had previously heard nothing of the matter, "of what do the prisoners stand accused?"

"Of horse-stealing!" promptly replied the general. "I accuse them of stealing my horse."

"Under what circumstances, General Brooke?"

"Under circumstances of the most atrocious character."

"Explain."

"Riding about three miles from the town, I was suddenly attacked by a scoundrel—"

"Which of them?—One of these?"

"No; one of their guilty associates, who struck me from my horse—"

"But what did you do *first*?" cried Tom.

"Silence!" growled the magistrate. "The course of justice must not be interrupted. It will be your turn to speak by-and-by. The charge looks black already—very black."

"Black!" cried Tom, "why you haven't yet—"

"Silence!"

"Shut up, Tommy," said Todd. "Shut up. Let's hear all he's got to say."

"I insist upon having no more of these unseemly interruptions," said the magistrate. "Now, then, General Brooke, proceed. You were struck from your horse, you say. Were the prisoners present at the time?"

"The younger one was."



"And to him, I presume, you can swear?"

"I can. He was there at the time. I lost my horse, and on reaching the town I procured the assistance of these two officers, who with me found it in the elder one's stable."

"Ah!" grunted the magistrate, with an expression of profundity. "Ah, then do you charge the elder prisoner with stealing the horse, or receiving it with a guilty knowledge, that is, knowing it to have been stolen? When a man steals a horse he steals it; he is the thief; but when a man receives it with a guilty knowledge, although the law holds him to be worse than the thief, he is not the man by whom the horse was stolen. The question for my consideration, before I commit these men, therefore, is, whether, notwithstanding they belong to the same gang or party—whether, under all the circumstances, and leaving entirely out of the question the manifest fact of their having acted in concert—it will be my duty to commit them both for the robbery, or only one as the thief and the other as the receiver. This, of course, is a point of great importance; I shall, therefore, reserve that point, in order that I may take the opinion of my brother magistrates upon it. Certainly my present impression would prompt me to draw a distinction between the two prisoners; but if there be a doubt, they are fully entitled to the benefit of that doubt, and therefore the point is reserved. With respect, however, to the general charge," he added, turning to "Burns' Justice," "it is, in my judgment, abundantly clear that horse-stealing, as here defined—"

At this moment, Mildmay—for whom Todd's man had galloped off—sent in his card, and demanded admittance.

"Who is this person?" inquired the magistrate.

"He says, sir, that he is the chief witness," replied the servant

"The chief witness? What, in this case?"

"Yes, sir."

"Admit him."

Mildmay was ushered in accordingly, and as he entered, the general exclaimed—

"That's the other villain! That's he who struck me! That's the man by whom I was first attacked, and now I charge him with the others."

"Why, what is all this?" demanded Mildmay, calmly. "To what lengths *will* your vindictive spirit lead you?"

"Vindictive spirit?" said the magistrate, addressing the general. "You know this person, then?"

"I never, in my life, saw him until to-day, when he assailed me."

"Then what does he mean by *vindictiveness*?"

"I care not what he means," replied the general. "I charge him with the same crime as that with which I have charged his degraded associates."

"And what crime is that?" inquired Mildmay.

"Horse-stealing!" shouted the general.

"Do so," returned Mildmay, "do so, at your peril. Let me be retained on such a charge for one *moment*, and I'll make you for ever use this day. When you deal with me, sir, you deal with a man who has *no* family reasons for enduring even the semblance of degradation in silence. Dare to accuse me of any such crime—cause me to be detained for an instant on such a charge—and I'll not only see what the law can do, but I'll myself hold you up to universal execration."

"And pray," said the magistrate, "who are you?"

"My name is Mildmay—William Mildmay; my address in London you will find on that card."

"Mildmay.—Are you an author, sir?"

"I am."

"Ay, Mildmay. I thought that I had heard the name before. I have read, sir, some of your works with great pleasure. Nevertheless, I have a duty to perform, and now let us proceed as the regular course of justice demands. In the first place, you are accused of having attacked General Brooke. What have you to say in answer to that accusation? Did you, or did you not, knock him off his horse?"

"I did," replied Mildmay. "I struck him from his horse for committing a gross and cowardly outrage upon a lady who was riding by my side. I was not, at the time, aware of his being that lady's father, and therefore, when I saw him strike her with his whip, and heard him assail her with one of the vilest epithets, I being, at the time, naturally indignant, dealt him a blow which sent him to the ground."

"But what right had you by the side of that lady? Were you annoying her at all?"

"She is the wife of my friend here, whom I came to visit."

"Oh, then this is your son-in-law, General Brooke?"

"He is the villain who *stole* my daughter from me."

"This alters the complexion of things," said the magistrate. "But how about the horse, Mr. Mildmay?"

"When General Brooke fell, his horse ran away, and as Mr. Todd was anxious to propitiate the general, he started with his son to look after his horse, for the purpose of taking him back to the Hall."

"And as we came along the road," added Tom, "we saw a man leading him, and that's how we got him. As for stealing—if the general thinks we wanted to *steal* the horse, he must be cracked;—his roof *can't* be sound; he must have a tile off somewhere."

"Oh, the general," cried Mildmay, "thinks nothing of the sort."

It is perfectly inconceivable that you could have had any such intention. His object was to annoy you, to degrade you."

"Nothing more," added Tom. "To have us dragged through the town by these ruffians here—these cowardly, unmanly curs."

"We used no more violence than was necessary," said one of the officers.

"What!" cried Tom, with an aspect of ferocity.

"There certainly does appear to have been a very great deal of unnecessary violence used," observed the magistrate, "because it is clear, that in point of fact it was necessary to use no violence at all. As to the charge itself, it is my duty to say that it utterly falls to the ground. It will not be required of me, of course, to recapitulate the evidence—the whole of which tends directly to show that the accusation cannot be sustained. I have before me no proof of stealing. There is, indeed, proof of possession; but where no felony is contemplated, possession is not a felonious possession. It appears to me, on reviewing the case—which it is my duty to do dispassionately—that there unhappily exists between the complainant and the accused a species of misunderstanding. I do not, as a magistrate, conceive it to be my duty to enter into private or family matters, because they are strictly, and in themselves, of a private or family nature, but as a clergyman and as a man, I do hold it to be my duty to express an earnest hope that a reconciliation will be effected, and that of this matter we shall hear no more."

"Sir," said Todd, as the magistrate suddenly sank back in his chair, as if completely overpowered by his own eloquence, "I am an old man, as you see; I have been in this town more than forty year, and never wronged mortal flesh of a penny: I've kept my character free from stain until this blessed day: still, although I've been treated as I have been—although I've been dragged through the town like a mere common felon, which was, of course, dreadfully hurtful to my feelings—still I don't care for that, I don't care for feelings, I don't care for what I have suffered in mind, I don't care a bit about any individual thing upon earth; I'll forget all, and won't say another word about it, if the general will *but* forgive his daughter for marrying without his consent."

"It is," said the magistrate, "or ought to be, our daily prayer, that our trespasses may be forgiven as we forgive them that trespass against us; and although there are cases in which society with justice demands that offenders should be punished, as this is a case of a purely private character—a case in which the security of the public cannot be said to be involved, I do venture, as a clergyman of the Church of England, to express a hope—"

"Do you," interrupted the general, "feel, as a magistrate, justified in discharging these men?"

"Most certainly—*most* certainly."

"Then I have nothing more either to say or to do here. I did think that justice might be found to reign even in a magistrate's room."

"Justice reigns here, General Brooke," replied the magistrate, "and ever shall reign, sir, while I am present."

"In *future*," retorted the general, sarcastically, "I hope it ever will," and without condescending even to bow to the magistrate—who conceived that to be the very grossest case of contempt to which authority was ever subjected—he instantly quitted the room.

"And now, sir," said Todd, "I hope, for the sake of others who may be as unjustly accused as we have been, that you will tell these officers that, in using so much violence as they used towards us, they not only exceed their duty, but act more like fiends than men."

"Their conduct," observed the magistrate, "shall be duly represented in the proper quarter."

"We shouldn't have done it," said one of the officers, "if the general hadn't told us they were desperate."

"Not another word," cried the magistrate. "Leave the room. And now," he added, when the officers had left, "I have to express my sincere regret that this outrage—for an outrage it is, and a gross outrage too—should have been, in the name of justice, committed. I experience no difficulty whatever in entering into your feelings. You have your remedy, it is true; the law supplies you with a remedy; but I perceive that, for the sake of the feelings of *one*, that remedy will not be adopted. The general—whose object is persecution—knows this, or he would not have ventured so far. As your friend Mr. Mildmay very properly hinted, if no *family* reasons existed for enduring persecution, without having recourse to the law of the land, he would not have *dared* to pursue such a course. However, I do hope that he may soon become reconciled, and that, henceforward, all persecution may cease."

"I hope so too, with all my heart!" cried Todd, whose feelings were much more calm, and who then, with Tom and Mildmay, took leave of the magistrate, by whom they were conducted with great politeness to the door; but the moment they appeared to the crowd outside, who had from the officers ascertained all, they were hailed with three deafening cheers.

The magistrate, for an instant, scarcely knew what to make of this popular manifestation of feeling; but on recovering his self-possession, he raised his hands to enjoin silence, and cried, in a loud voice—

"My friends—I hold it to be my duty as a magistrate, as a clergyman, and as a man, to state that these gentlemen leave without the slightest stain upon their character."

"Bravo, bravo!" shouted the crowd, with all the vehemence of which they were capable. "Now, then! Hoo-ray—hoo-ray—hoo-ray! Now, three cheers for the reverend gent. Hoo-ray—hoo-ray—

HOO-ray! One cheer more. HOO-RAY! A little 'un in. HOO-RA-A-A-A-Y!"

The magistrate—by whom popularity had never been held in contempt—bowed repeatedly, and with unexampled grace, to the crowd, who then accompanied Todd—who kept excellent beer—to his house, at which they felt they should get just as much as they liked to drink—as a matter of gratitude—gratis. Nor were they in this disappointed: the moment he entered with Mildmay and Tom, who had linked his arms in theirs, although he needed no support, he ordered six gallons to be sent into the room, which was, of course, instantly crowded.

In the meantime the whole town was in a state of commotion. Everybody was anxious to talk to everybody on the subject, and, albeit the knowing ones scorned to yield—albeit they contended that “it was all very well,” that “there must be something in it,” that “they wouldn’t have been taken into custody for nothing,”—the general feeling of the town was decidedly in favour of its having been a base attempt to degrade Todd and “the Squire,”—a sobriquet which Tom had already acquired—in the eyes of their neighbours and friends.

“And what is the general after all?” demanded one of the most influential tradesmen in the street. “What good does he do to the town? Doesn’t he have almost everything from London? What good is he to us? Talk of him in the same breath with the Squire, who spends his money amongst us like a prince! why he ain’t fit to be named the same day! Don’t tell me! The thing is perfectly ridiculous! Is it as if we didn’t *know* he’s got money? Is it as if we didn’t know where he got his money *from*? Talk of a man like him stealing a horse! It’s disgusting. There, look there; that’s one of his own horses,” he added, as one of Tom’s servants rode past; “does that look like the horse of a man who wants to steal one? It’s enough to make an Englishman sick of his native land.”

The servant who had passed during the delivery of this speech had been sent by Georgiana, who coupling the fact of Mildmay having been summoned, with Tom’s prolonged absence, felt certain that something must be wrong, and therefore naturally wished to ascertain without delay. He had, however, no sooner reached the house than Tom appeared and ordered him to go for the curriele, sending at the same time a message to Georgiana to the effect that all was right; that business had detained them, and that immediately the curriele arrived they should return.

Having thus despatched his servant, Tom re-entered the house, closely followed by an attorney, who, having an eye to business, without hesitating a single moment, ordered a pint of wine.

Todd knew him; he moreover knew his object, and was therefore on his guard.

“I have heard, Mr. Todd,” said the attorney at length—“I have heard of this monstrous proceeding, and cannot but sympathise with

you. In all my experience, which has been, you know, great; in the whole course of my practice, which has been most extensive, I never knew or heard of an outrage so atrocious."

"It was too bad," said Todd. "It was much too bad."

"Too bad, sir! Why you ought to proceed against the general forthwith. You ought to serve him *immediately* with notice of action. I'd undertake to get you five thousand pounds down. Yes! No jury in England—if the case were managed as I should manage it—could feel themselves justified in giving you less. But, of course, you *intend* to bring an action against him?"

"Why I never like to be too fast," replied Todd. "I like to think before I act. I never stir till I'm quite sure I shan't put my foot in it."

"Put your foot in it! Why, my dear sir, that, in a case of this character and complexion, is impossible—utterly, morally, legally impossible. There is not a more atrocious case on record. Seized as you have been in your own house, manacled like a convicted felon, dragged through the town with fiend-like violence, and charged with the commission of a crime of which you were not only innocent, but of which there was not the slightest ground for suspecting you to have been guilty, and that, too, in the face of day, in the nineteenth century, and in the very centre of civilisation! Why nothing more monstrous—I say nothing more monstrous—and I say it advisedly—nothing more perfectly monstrous ever sullied the annals of England yet. Damages the most exemplary must in a case like this be given. No twelve honest men could be empannelled who, if the whole case were properly conducted, and I'd take care it should be if I had the management of it,—no twelve honest men I say,—and I say it advisedly,—could be empannelled who would *think* of returning a verdict for less than five thousand pounds."

"Well," said Todd, drily, "I shall see. I'll turn the matter over a time or two. How do you like that wine, sir?"

"It's excellent; the finest glass of wine I ever drank in my life; rich, fruity, and not too old. Have you a pretty good stock of it?"

"Oh, about twenty or thirty dozen."

"Ah, it's capital; fine body, fine flavour. I must have some of this wine. You see, Mr. Todd," he added, "yours is not at all an ordinary case."

"Oh, I see that," cried Todd; "oh, I see that clearly."

"Now, governor," said Tom, "you'll be all behind as usual. Why don't you go up and tiddivate? The drag'll be here directly."

"I think," returned Todd, "I do think, with the house full and all that, I'd better not go."

"Not go!" echoed Tom, "then all the fat'll be in the fire. Not go! Do you want George to know all about it, then?"

"I wouldn't have her know it for the world," replied Todd.

"Then, you'd better return with us," said Mildmay, "if you do not stop more than an hour."

"I'll send you back just when you like," cried Tom. "If you only go with us she'll be satisfied. Now go up and make yourself a little matters tidy. They've twisted your neckcloth all manner of ways. There you are, you see; the knot's right behind."

"Well," said Todd, "I'll go and put on a clean 'un."

"I never," exclaimed the attorney, "when Todd had left the bar, "I never, in the whole course of my experience, heard of anything so perfectly atrocious. General Brooke ought to be trounced, sir. I say it advisedly, trounced; and he *shall* be trounced if *I* have the management of the case—severely, justly, and legally trounced."

"Are these men, sir, to have any more beer?" inquired Polly.

"Yes," replied Tom; "but I'll go in and speak to 'em;" and leaving the attorney to amuse Mildmay with his deeply indignant eloquence, he proceeded at once to the parlour.

The moment he entered he was hailed, of course, with a most enthusiastic shout of delight.

"Bravo! bravo!" "Here he is!" "A regular out-and-out stunning trump!" "A British Briton, and no mistake!" and "One of Nature's nobbiest nobs!"—were among the rapturous exclamations.

"Now look here," said he, when something like attention had been commanded by those who could make the most noise; "you know how the governor and me has been treated. [*Shame! shame!*—Hear, hear, hear! *Hold* your noise! D'ye *hear!* *Si-LANCE!*] *We* want to steal a horse! [*Groans.*] *WE!* [*Tremendous groans*]—Haven't I horses enough in my own stable? [*Applause*]—and if I wanted more haven't I tin enough to buy half a million? [*Vociferous applause.*] I should think so—[*Vehement and long-continued cheering*]—and no mistake. [*Renewed and additionally-enthusiastic cheering.*] What!—[*Bravo*]—can any flesh believe a single word of it? [*No, no, no.*] Not a bit of it. [*Thunders.*] Now I'll tell you what it is. [*Hear, hear, hear, hear.*] I know you're all trumps. [*Hear, hear.*] Every man present shall have a glass of brandy-and-water—[*Ecstatic sensation*]—and I'll have one with you. [*Maniacal cheers.*] Polly!—[*Deafening shouts*]—Here, I'll go and mix 'em myself. [*Screams.*] Come along, four or five of you, and help to bring 'em in."

Accordingly, accompanied by five of the party, Tom went to mix the brandy-and-water, and when five trays had been heavily laden, he followed them into the parlour.

"Now," cried one of the leading men, who at that period had a more powerful voice than any other man in Newmarket, "before you drink a drain, my boys, I'll give you the jolly good health of the

Squire. [Thunders followed this proposition.] Now, then, go reg'lar: three times three!"—and three times three cheers were accordingly given. "Now, then," he added, "the musical honours," and led by him, with tremendous effect, they shouted the following—

## NATIONAL CHORUS.

For he's a jolly good fel-low,  
 For he's a jolly good fel-low,  
 For he's a jolly good fel-low,  
     And so say all of us,  
     And so say all of us,  
     And so say all of us!  
 For he's a jolly good fel-low,  
 For he's a jolly good fel-low,  
 For he's a jolly good fel-low,  
     And so say all of us.  
 With a hip, hip, hip, hoo-ray,  
 With a hip, hip, hip, hoo-ray,  
 With a hip, hip, hip, hooray, boys.  
 With a hip, hip, hip, hooray, boys,  
 With a hip, hip, hip, hooray, boys!  
 With a hip, hip, hip, hoo-ray!  
     Hoo-ray!—hoo-ray!—hoo-ray!

"One cheer more."

*Hoo-ray!*

"Now the little 'un in."

HOO-RAY!!!

"Bravo!" cried Tom, "I knew you were Britons, and now, in return, I'll drink all your good healths—wives, families, kids, and connexions [*applause*!]. Success to 'em all! May they never want nothing! Whenever they *do*, why you know where I live."

*Electric* cheers marked the conclusion of this speech: the very glasses danced with enthusiasm: but as the curriele dashed up to the door at the moment, Tom left them inspired with admiration.

"Now, governor," said he, on his return to the bar, for Todd had completed his toilet, "are you ready?"

"Quite, Tommy, quite," replied Todd.

"Very well. Now would you like to drive the tits, Mildmay?"

"Oh, no; *you* drive," replied Mildmay; "*I'll* mount the horse I brought with me."

The horse was accordingly ordered, and when the man had brought him round, Tom and his father proceeded to the curriele; but the party in the parlour no sooner saw this than they rushed out of the



house and cheered rapturously, as Tom—proud of his plunging horses—drove off.

Having dashed through the town in a most splendid style, Tom slackened his pace until Mildmay came up, when Todd at once inquired what he thought of the attorney.

"He can *talk*," replied Mildmay. "His tongue appears to outstrip his talent. He is evidently anxious for you to give him a job."

"But I'll not—not a bit of it. You wouldn't advise me, would you?"

"Why, that depends entirely upon circumstances. I don't speak with reference to him; but if the general, finding that he may annoy you with impunity, should continue to pursue the same course of persecution, you must, as a matter of justice to yourself, put a stop to it."

"I see," said Todd, thoughtfully: "I see, I see."

"There is a point beyond which forbearance ought not to go."

"But for *this* dodge," interposed Tom, "you wouldn't advise us to do anything in the law line for *this*?"

"No: certainly *not*! I speak merely with respect to the possibility; I may indeed say, the probability of his continuing to annoy you in this disgraceful manner."

"Of course it won't do at no price, you know, if he does—will it, governor?"

"No, Tommy, no," replied Todd, who sank back deep in thought.

On their arrival Georgiana appeared at the door, and with an expression of anxiety, inquired what had detained them. "I fear," she added, taking Todd's arm, "that something has happened of a most unpleasant nature."

"Unpleasant!" cried Todd.

"If so," pursued Georgiana, "tell me, there's a dear soul. Have you—*have* you—seen my father?"

"Oh, yes: we saw him in the town; he got there before us. We met with the horse as we went: he was caught on the Mildenhall road, and I took him to my stable. The general knows he's there, and I dessay has sent for him by this time."

"But what did he say?"

"Oh, he said next to nothing to us. You know we couldn't expect him, my dear, to say much. But never fear: all will be right by-and-by."

"But why did you send in such haste for Mr. Mildmay?"

"Why, I thought, after what had occurred, you know, that we'd better send for him to clear the thing up."

"Was papa *very* angry?"

"Why, you know, we couldn't expect him to be in a *very* good

temper ! But he didn't say much to us ; and another thing is, he didn't say a word against *you* !”

“Thank Heaven !”

“So you see it'll soon be all right. And now I've only just come to have a bit o' dinner and off. Is it ready ?”

“Quite,” replied Georgiana. “But can you not spend the evening with us ?”

“Can't, my dear, can't. I must be off in about an hour. Business, dear : business.”

The bell was rung, and they proceeded to dinner ; after which Todd—finding that Georgiana's tears were hushed—rose, and apparently in excellent spirits, took his leave.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE INTERVIEW AT THE HALL.

As Todd found on his return that the general's horse had not been sent for, his first impression was that he ought at once to send to the Hall ; but having lighted his pipe, and brought his mind to bear upon the point, and all its varied ramifications, he eventually felt that the general wished *him* to take the horse back, in order that he might have an apparently unsought-for interview with him in private.

“If he don't mean that,” said he, arguing with himself, “what *does* he mean ? He knows where the horse is—why don't he send for him ? Why, but because he wants me to go up, and his pride won't let him ask me. That's it. I *know* it. I see it as clear as crystal. He knows he's done wrong, and he's afeared I shall take advantage on it, and he thinks this a good opportunity for bringin' matters round. That's about it. ‘Todd,’ says he to himself, ‘may be advised to go to law, and although he said he'd forget it if I'd forgive Georgianny, he may be overpersuaded by some shark of a lawyer to follow that advice ; so I shan't send for the horse, because if I don't send he's safe to bring it over, and then I can make it right without appearing to humble my pride.’ That's the dodge. That's it. That's the notion. I know it. ‘And after all,’ says he to himself, ‘what's the good o' my holdin' out now ? The job's jobbed. There they are. Tied up, and can't be untied. Fixed. Man and wife : and no *mistake* ! What's the good ? No : I'll bet ten to one he brings it over in the mornin', and then we shall see. He's a jolly forgiving old swell after all.’

That's about it. That's the ideas he has, I'll bet a million; and so, if he don't send for it to-night—and he won't; I know he won't; I'll forfeit my life if he does—I'll take it up to him in the morning."

Well: the general did *not* send for the horse, and Todd—who had had a most restless night, having dreamt that he had been not only handcuffed but hanged—rose in the morning with all his previous convictions, having reference to the general's motives, strengthened. He had, however, made up his mind not to act until he had consulted Mildmay, in whose judgment he had the most perfect confidence. He therefore, immediately after breakfast, mounted his mare, and rode over to the Box—as it was called, although it contained twelve excellent rooms, independently of the kitchens—and found Mildmay writing in one of the parlours.

"Now, look here," said Todd, having greeted him warmly, "will you tell me the truth?"

"The truth!" echoed Mildmay, smiling; "I always endeavour to adhere to it as much as possible."

"I know; but *is* what you're about now particular?"

"Not at all. What I'm doing now, I can do just as well another time."

"Very well: then I want just to ask your advice. Now look here, the general hasn't sent for his horse."

"Then send it to him."

"Why? What's your ideas? I like to have ideas. Why send it to him?"

"Because *my* impression is, that he's hatching some fresh annoyance, based upon the assumed fact of the horse being detained."

"Do you think so? I know you're wide awake—I know it—and, therefore, I wouldn't move without consulting you. But, don't you think it's different: now don't you? Now I'll tell you what my ideas is. He ain't sent for his horse. Very well: now my notions runs in this here direction. He ain't sent for it because he wants me to take it over, so that when I go he may have some private conversation with me, and make it all right without humbling himself. Now, what d'you think?"

"Why, my impression is certainly of an opposite character; still, I see no *objection* to your taking the horse home."

"That's just my ideas! It *can* do no harm, and it may do some good; so it's about the safest game a man can play. If these *should* be his notions, why all will be right: if they shouldn't, why we are but where we are."

"Well, then, take the horse home. Shall I go with you?"

"Why, I don't think he's forgot that there blow; and if he sees you, it might, you know, irritate him. All I want is, Mr. Mildmay, to make it all right between him and Georgianny. I don't care a button about anything else; and I shouldn't care much about that—for

he's no great shakes of a man after all—if I didn't believe that while they're so the poor thing'll never be happy. So I think, puttin' this and that together, it would be, you know, as well for you not to see him with me."

"Oh! I didn't mean to suggest that I should go in with you—decidedly not; I merely thought of riding with you as far as the park."

"I see! Well! if you'll do that, you know, you'll *oblige* me—I shall take it, in fact, as a particular favour, because, you know, we can talk the matter over on the road. When'll you start?"

"We had better go at once! I'll just run up-stairs, and be with you again directly."

"Very well; then I'll go and get the saddle put upon one of the horses. Which'll you have?"

"Oh! the one I rode yesterday."

"Very well."

Having briefly explained to Georgiana and Mary that they were going to take a quiet ride together, Todd and Mildmay drew Tom aside, exchanged a few words with him on the subject, and started.

They had, in the first place, to go for the general's horse; and when Todd had directed his man to lead it out of the town, they followed, and, taking the horse in hand, proceeded towards the Hall.

The course to be pursued was then fully discussed, and, although their ideas, having reference to the general's motives, were opposed, they agreed upon the expediency of adopting the tone and spirit of propitiation, without, however, withholding from him the knowledge of their full determination to put a stop to persecution in the event of its being renewed.

"And now," said Mildmay, as they drew near the lodge, "while you are with him I'll ride about here; I shall see you as you come through the park, and will meet you near the gate. Of course I need not again urge the absolute necessity for being firm."

"All right," returned Todd; "all right, sir—all right. I'll be like a *rock*—like a rock!"

They then parted, and Todd rode up to the Hall, but, seeing near the stables one of the grooms whom he knew, he immediately turned his horse towards him.

"Ah! Richard," he cried, "how are you?"

"How do, Mr. Todd?" returned Richard. "Then *you've* had the horse, I see!"

"Yes, he's been in my stable since yesterday mornin'."

"Well, I *couldn't* make out where he was! I knew he must be somewhere; but, as for getting anything out of the general about him, I might as well have tried to get blood out of a brick."

"Wouldn't open—eh? I see. Well, but I say—how goes it?"

"You said goes it, didn't you? It is how goes it. Why, I'll tell

you how it goes: ever since that affair, you know, happened, the general has been a regular rattlesnake. There's no doing anything with him; and as for grooms, he hates the very sight of us, and treats us like dogs. I'm going to leave; I gave him warning last week. I can't stand it no longer, and *won't*—and so that's all about it."

"Well, when you *do* leave, why you know where I live. I may, you know, be able to get you into something."

"I'm very much obliged to you. I'll not forget to call."

"No, don't; something, you know, may turn up 'twixt this and then. But, I say, is the general at home?"

"No, he's started off somewhere by himself. He never takes either of us out with him now."

"When do you expect him back?"

"Why, I don't much care if he never comes back at all; but I don't suppose he'll be very long now."

"I say, Richard—you know things, I know, as well as here and there one: but do you think it likely I could see the missis?"

"Well, I don't know. She ain't very difficult to see; but whether *you* could see her, you know, is a horse of another colour. I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll send William up to ask her, if you like?"

"I wish you would: there's a good fellow. Just tell him to say, you know, I've brought home the horse; and, as the general ain't at home, I should like to speak to her, you know."

"All right."

"And while you're gone, I'll put the horse in the stable."

Richard went accordingly into the house, and sent up a message to this effect by William; and, although Mrs. Brooke at first refused to see Todd, her naturally strong desire to hear direct from her child, whom she still loved with all a mother's fondness, prevailed; and she eventually directed the servant to show him up.

This Richard immediately communicated to Todd, who, exclaiming, "That's a comfort! It's all right now!"—followed him into the house.

On being ushered into the room, Todd bowed with much humility; and Mrs. Brooke, who was then in tears, bent slightly in acknowledgment.

"I beg pardon, ma'am," said he, in somewhat tremulous accents; "I beg a thousand pardons for intrudin'—but—"

"Mr. Todd," she observed, waving her hand, "there is a chair."

Todd again bowed profoundly; and, having seated himself, continued:

"I hope you'll forgive me, but I couldn't help thinkin' that the mother of such an angel as your beautiful daughter wouldn't refuse to see me, as I didn't find the general at home."

"How is Georgiana?" she inquired with emotion; "is she well?"

"Yes, ma'am; in health she's very well indeed; and only wants your forgiveness and the general's to make her quite happy. She never, ma'am, never can be happy without."

"She has *my* forgiveness!" exclaimed Mrs. Brooke, as fresh tears gushed from her eyes. "Yes, she has *my* forgiveness."

"God bless you, ma'am! God bless you for that: Heaven will reward you for it. But the general, ma'am—the general; how can he be got to forgive her too?"

Mrs. Brooke moved her head mournfully, and sighed.

"I am a father," he continued, "and I once had a daughter, who would have been the very image of yours; and although I might—I don't mean to say that I shouldn't—I might have been angry—very angry—if please God she'd been spared, and had married in any private clandestine sort of way; but I call her to witness—and she's now in heaven;—I call her to witness *in* heaven, that I couldn't have held out so."

"Your son, I hope, treats Georgiana most kindly?"

"If he didn't, I'd cast him off at once; I wouldn't speak to him; I wouldn't own him!—but he does: she's all the world to him; he wouldn't take ten millions of worlds for her! He's all a husband should be to her; and she, God bless her! is all a wife should be to him."

"Have you seen her lately?"

"Oh! I see 'em every day; and, sometimes, three or four times a day."

"Indeed!"

"Of course, ma'am, you know that they are living down here?"

"Living down here! I thought they were in London."

"Oh! they have been living down here for some time! But, dear me, though, didn't you know that before?"

"I had no idea of it. But, do you mean to say that Georgiana has absolutely *settled* down here?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am; she thought that if even she wasn't allowed to see you, she should be more happy if she knew that she was near you; and so they took a house just out of the town—it goes by the name of 'The Squire's Box;'—everybody knows it—and one of the spiciest little places in the country. Oh! how I wish you could see it, and go over it: she'd almost break her heart with joy. But didn't you know, ma'am, that yesterday the general himself saw her?"

"The general! What—saw Georgiana?"

"Yes, ma'am. What haven't you heard of it?"

"No," she replied, with an expression of intense thought; "no, I have not indeed."

"Oh, he saw her, *unfortunately*."

"Why, *unfortunately*?"

"Because I'm afraid it has widened the breach."

"How? I beg of you to tell me all about it."

"I will, ma'am: although for her sake—not my own—I don't care a bit about myself—I hope, ma'am, you'll not tell the general I told you. She was riding on horseback yesterday morning with Mr. Mildmay, a gentleman who is down here with his wife on a visit, when the general, quite unawares, rode up, and calling her by a very improper name, cut her across the shoulders with his whip."

"Good Heavens! Well, sir—well."

"Well, Mr. Mildmay not knowing the general from Adam, rushed at him and knocked him off his horse, before my son could reach the spot: for he was driving Mrs. Mildmay in the curriole some distance behind. Well, ma'am, Georgianny no sooner shrieked out to Mr. Mildmay, to tell him not to injure her father, than she fainted, and when Tom came up he and the general had some words. Well, there was an end of that. Now, ma'am, shall I go on?"

"Yes; do, for Heaven's sake, tell me all."

"Well, in the scuffle the general's horse ran away—"

"But did Georgiana fall? was *she* injured?"

"Not in the least. Mr. Mildmay held her till Tom came up and lifted her from her saddle into the carriage. Well, as I was saying, the horse ran away, and when they came home and told me all about it, for I happened to be at the Box at the time, my son and me started off after the horse, which I'd seen gallop past the very place without his rider. Well, as luck would have it, we found the horse; a man had stopped him on the Mildenhall road, and we took him home,—I mean to my house,—and had him rubbed down, and ordered my mare to be saddled, thinking that, if I brought him back to the Hall, and explained to the general that Mr. Mildmay, when he struck him, didn't know that he was Georgianny's father, he'd be pacified. *But* we'd no sooner got into the house to have a glass of wine before I started, than in comes the general with a couple of officers, and charges me and my son with having *stolen* his horse!"

"Good gracious, is it possible!"

"Well, ma'am, they clapped a pair of handcuffs on in no time—they did it before we knew where we was—and, thus degraded and disgraced, they dragged us through the town. I shall never forget my feelings then, the longest day I have to live."

"Well, sir, well?"

"Well, when we got afore the magistrate he soon saw through it, especially when Mr. Mildmay, who is a gentleman of great eddication, came in and explained all."

"And the magistrate discharged you, of course?"

"He did, ma'am: and told the mob, which was waiting outside, that we left without a stain upon our character; but then the general was more enraged than ever, although I told him, before the magistrate, that I wouldn't care a button about my own feelings, that I'd forget and forgive all, and never say another syllable about it, if he

would but forgive Georgianny. Well, the horse still remained in my stable: the general never sent for him, and as the highest object I have in life is to see him and Georgianny friends again, I brought the horse back this morning, and with this idea, that if the general would but talk to me, and go into the matter quietly, all would be well."

"Mr. Todd," said Mrs. Brooke, "you have amazed me—perfectly amazed me. I was induced, by the irritability of the general, to think that *something* had happened, but I knew not what it was. You will pardon the question, Mr. Todd, but, of course, that which you have told me now is the truth?"

"It is, ma'am: and nothing but the truth. I call my darling child to witness it, and she is now in heaven with the angels."

"I am satisfied," returned Mrs. Brooke, whose tones were still tremulous, "*perfectly* satisfied; and although I cannot—I cannot but wish that Georgiana was with me, still I *hope*—I hope that she will be happy."

"May I tell her from *you* that you forgive her?"

"You may: for I do forgive her with all my heart. Where did you say they resided?"

"At 'The Squire's Box,' about a mile and a half from—"

"Exactly; I merely asked. Here is the general," she added, as his harsh voice was heard near the door."

"Shall I leave the room?" inquired Todd, rising.

"No; I beg that you will continue to be seated."

Todd, however, had scarcely resumed his seat, when the general entered the room, and with an aspect of ferocity demanded to know what right he had there.

"I came here, general," said Todd, who rose on the instant,—"*I* came here to bring back your horse."

"It's well for you that you *have* brought him back: if you had *not* done so, and that before *twelve* o'clock, you should have suffered severely."

"But, General Brooke," said Todd—

"*Silence!*" exclaimed the general, in a voice of thunder. "*How* dare you talk to me, you vulgar, low-bred *dog*! Be off, *instantly!*"

"But will you not hear me?"

"No, I will *not!*"

"But, my dear," interposed Mrs. Brooke, "pray, pray do not be so impetuous."

"*Will* you leave the room!" cried the general, utterly regardless of this appeal; "stay but another moment here, and my servants shall *kick* you out of the house."

"General," said Todd, "I am sorry for this:" and having bowed to Mrs. Brooke, he withdrew.

"Why do you harbour such a wretch as that here?" cried the general, when Todd had retired.



Mrs. Brooke made no answer : she burst into tears and instantly quitted the room.

"Well," said Richard, when Todd, with a heavy heart, returned to the stables, "you found him a nice man, I dessay, didn't you?"

"A nice man? He's *no* man," replied Todd, indignantly. "There ain't a mite of anything like a man in him! He hasn't the feelings of a man: he ain't a man: he ain't fit to be *called* a man by any mortal flesh."

"He saw your mare here, and when he asked whose it was, and heard she was yours, you should only just have seen him—that's all. I knew you wouldn't stop long in the house after that. I wonder he didn't pitch you out of the winder."

"Pitch *me* out o' the winder? What *he*? He didn't attempt it. If he had, I'd have held him up at arm's length and dashed him to the ground. He knows a trick worth two of that, for I *could* have done it, and would. His wife's a lady; but he is a tyrant and a brute!"

"He's a very nice man for a very small party. I know him; *I've* had enough of him."

"D'you hear, fellow," shouted the general, from the balcony; "drive that *dog* out of the park."

"What dog?" inquired Richard. "I don't see no dog."

"He means me," said Todd. "I'm the dog."

"I know it; I know who he means," said Richard, as the general withdrew from the balcony. "I was only going to have a bit of a game with him, that's all. He's a beauty, ain't he? And no *mistake*!"

"Well," said Todd, "I'll cut it at once. I shall only be getting you, perhaps, into trouble."

"Not a bit of it. I care just as much about him as he cares about me, and he knows it; so that makes no odds, not a mite."

"Well, quarrels are always best avoided. Here, Richard," he added, placing half a sovereign in his hand, "get something to drink, and don't forget to call when you leave—d'you hear?"

"I'll not, Mr. Todd, and I'm very much obliged to you. Give my best respects to your son. I wish him joy with all my heart."

Todd then rode off, and on reaching the lodge found Mildmay near the gate.

"I'm sorry I've kept you so long," said he; "I've pretty well tired you out."

"Not at all," replied Mildmay. "Don't say a single word about that. What success?"

"You were right—quite right: you couldn't have guessed much nearer if you'd known. He is a tyrant, Mr. Mildmay; a tyrant and a wretch, with no more of the feelings of a father in him than there is in that stump of a tree. But I'll tell you all about it."

"I saw him go in."

"Did he see you?"

"Only at a distance; he couldn't have known me again."

"I saw Mrs. Brooke, and she's one of the right sort. I'd a long conversation with her; but as for *him*—However, I'll go right through it."

He then proceeded to explain all that had occurred, and repeated almost every word that had been uttered by the general, Mrs. Brooke, Richard, and himself, and when, at length, he arrived at the conclusion, he inquired of Mildmay—who had listened without interposing a single observation—what he thought of it then.

"I am much pleased with the feelings displayed by Mrs. Brooke," replied Mildmay; "the development of those feelings may lead to a happier state of things; but did you warn the general against the pursuit of this system of annoyance?"

"Warn him!" cried Todd. "I couldn't get a word in edgewise."

"Then this must be done. If he will not listen, he must read. His observation, having reference to its being well for you that you brought the horse back to him before twelve o'clock, convinces me that he has made up his mind to persecute you both by all the means at his command. It *must* be put a stop to. You must do it for your own security. Why, you'll never be safe! I certainly should advise you to instruct an attorney to write to the general at once."

"Why, you see, Mr. Mildmay," said Todd, with a singular expression of reluctance, "I can't say I like this here law work—I *can't* say I like it!"

"I do not mean that the attorney should be instructed to *proceed* against the general, but merely to send him a letter, to the effect that, although he has acted most unjustly and most illegally, you are unwilling to bring an action against him; but that—as you have reason to believe that he contemplates the pursuit of a system of persecution—you have firmly resolved that he shall not pursue it with impunity—that the slightest addition to the wrong he has already inflicted will be immediately followed by an appeal to the law."

"Well—exactly—as a warnin' I can't say I see much objection to that."

"You *must* do it to protect yourself."

"Well, then; it shall be done. Perhaps you'll be kind enough to go to the lawyer's with me?"

"Oh, I'll do so with pleasure! And now with respect to the interview you have had with Mrs. Brooke: do you think of explaining the nature of it to Mrs. Todd?"

"Why, what do you think? I should like to let her know that

her mother forgives her, because I am quite sure it would make her happy. But the point is, how can it be done?"

"Oh, you can do it without entering into anything of an unpleasant character. The general omitted to send for his horse; you therefore took it up to the Hall. You found that *he* was not at home, but you saw Mrs. Brooke: and then all that directly relates to Mrs. Todd can be explained."

"That's *about* it! I see! Yes; that'll be the ticket. I think I see her now. How pleased she *will* be! You don't know how dearly I love her, Mr. Mildmay!"

"She is certainly one of the most amiable creatures breathing."

"I believe you. She is *all* that—and more. I never see her feller yet! But here we are. Now then to make her little heart leap with joy!"

Having alighted, they were met by Georgiana and Tom—Mary was sulking in one of the parlours—and Todd, seizing Georgiana's hand, exclaimed—

"*I've* got some news for you! Come along in!"

"Is it good news?" inquired Georgiana.

"Good! It'll make them two pretty eyes of yours dance and sparkle like a pair of blessed stars! Come along."

"Well, but I say," cried Tom. "You ain't a-going to have it all to yourselves, I suppose, are you?"

"Shall he come in and hear it?" said Todd, turning to Georgiana.

"Why," she replied, archly, and at the same time taking Tom's arm, "yes, let him."

"Very well! Then come along."

"Where is Mary?" inquired Mildmay.

Tom winked very privately, and pointed with great significance to the opposite door, which Mildmay at once opened, and found Mary lounging on the sofa, carelessly twirling her embroidered bag.

"Mary," said he, "are you not well, my girl?"

"It can't much signify to *you*," she replied, "whether I am or am not."

"Not signify to me, Mary! What do you mean?"

Mary pouted, but was silent.

"What is the matter?" he continued. "Have I in any way offended you?"

"Offended me, indeed. I don't think you care a bit about me."

"Come, come: you are not well."

"Oh, I'm very well. It isn't that."

"Then, what is it? Tell me; come, come, *don't* be simple."

"Simple: yes. It's a pity you didn't have somebody wiser."

"Mary, if you are about to be absurd, I must leave you until you are in a somewhat better temper."

"You can go; I don't want you. You can go again where you have been, for all me. You go now when you like, and, I suppose, where you like. I never know where you're going. You can't tell *me*—I'm nobody! How do I know where you've been this morning?"

"Mary—"

"Oh, I don't care; I asked you before you went out, and you wouldn't tell me."

"I told you, Mary, that—"

"You didn't!—so don't tell such stories."

"Tut, tut!—nonsense: *nonsense*!—I told you that Mr. Todd—"

"Mr. Todd! What has Mr. Todd got to do with it? What has he to do between *us*? What right has *he* to interfere, I wonder! He'd better, by half, mind his own business. *He* interfere, indeed! I wonder what next."

"Mary, don't be ridiculous."

"Oh, of course! Everything's ridiculous that *I* say. But I'll not put up with it; see if I do. Wherever you go I'll go; at all events I'll know where you go, if I watch you."

"And all this arises from the fact of my not telling you that Mr. Todd and I were going to the Hall."

"Then, why couldn't you tell me? I hate such ways. Why should I be kept in the dark? Why couldn't you tell me you was going there at once?"

"Because, Mary, it was deemed expedient to conceal the fact until the result were known."

"Conceal, indeed! Yes; it's all very well to say *conceal*; but you ought to conceal nothing. There ought to be no secrets between man and wife. What was there to *conceal*, I should like to know? But I see how it is; you care no more about *me* than a post; not a bit. While you are out taking your pleasure, and riding on horse-back, and going round the country, and laughing and talking, and enjoying yourself, here am I moping alone!—what do you care?"

"I am sure there was no necessity for your being alone, Mary. Mrs. Todd, I am quite convinced—had you felt so disposed—"

"Oh, of course!—she's all perfection! It's a pity you didn't have her. I know you like her better than you do me. But I won't put up with it, *I* can tell you, and so you needn't think it. *I've* seen you looking and smiling, and talking French together! I hate such sly ways; and another thing is, I won't bear it! You only talk French because you think I don't know what you mean; but I can see. I'm not quite blind neither. They who talk French do it because they're ashamed of saying what they have to say in common English. I see."

"Really, Mary, all this is very absurd."

"Of course! What *I* say is always absurd, but what Mrs. Todd says is quite another thing! *She* can never be absurd! Oh, dear me, no. She can never say anything wrong, or do anything wrong. Of course not. But *we* shall see! The cunningest get found out in time."

"Mary, you know that you wrong Mrs. Todd by indulging in these unworthy insinuations. She is an amiable woman—"

"Of course! All perfection."

"She has been kind, Mary—very kind—to you."

"And what if she has? Do you fancy that I'll not stick up for my rights?"

"Mary, you make me angry with you."

"I suppose you'll beat me next—give me a couple of black eyes—perhaps—"

"Mary! Do not be absurd."

"But I won't put up with it," she added, bursting into tears—"that I won't; I won't be ill-used by anybody, *I* know."

"Come, come," said Mildmay, soothingly, "for Heaven's sake be rational—"

"I suppose it's all because I can't play the piano."

"Be reasonable—there's a good girl. We are now in the house of our friends—friends who have been most kind to us, and to whom we ought, indeed, to feel grateful. It would be a poor return for their kindness were we to make them unhappy; and they would be unhappy, Mary, were they to know that such a scene as this had occurred. I feel sure that you do not mean what you have said. I am convinced that you believe Mrs. Todd to be in deed and in thought as virtuous as yourself. The little attentions which I have paid her have been prompted by the purest esteem, and with regard to the French—it is laughable certainly—still, I'll promise to speak French to her no more. Come, come, dry your eyes; do not let them see that you have been weeping. There, now you are yourself again. Come," he continued, kissing her affectionately, "let us take a walk in the garden. I have something to tell you—something with which I am sure you'll be pleased. There," he added, as she fondly threw her arms round his neck, "there, now, it's all over."

He then led her into the garden, in which they were very soon joined by Georgiana, whose joyous emotions need not be described.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE GENERAL'S THREAT.

"WELL, Tommy," cried Todd, when he called the next morning, "I've made up my mind."

"Is that a fact?" inquired Tom.

"Yes; I did it this mornin' before breakfast."

"Well, it's a blessing, I dare say. But what have you made up your mind to?"

"Why, about retirin'."

"Oh, ah! yes; well, you'll do it of course?"

"Yes, Tommy, yes: it's been a pill to swallow; but I see it won't do to keep on any longer, sittivated as you are now."

"Of course not; I told you so, didn't I?"

"You did: and I didn't see it then quite so forcible; but now I feel clear that one half of the general's dislike to the match has ariz from the well-known circumstance of my keepin' a public-house."

"Why to be sure."

"And, I do think, that if I retire and live right up like a nob, he'll come round."

"There's no doubt about that! There's no mistake at all about his liking it all the better. You see he treats you now like mere muck. But would he, if you was a nob? Not a bit of it! Then be a nob, and do the thing popular and spicy. There's no flesh alive looks more like one than you do: 'specially when you've got them silk stockings on of yours. You look like a popular bit of aristocracy made up of tin, and nothing but. What with that mob of seals, and that no end of chain, and them buckles, and altogether, nobody would take you for anything but a gentleman, if they didn't know you kept such a crib as that. Besides, look at the popular respectability of retirin'!"

"I know it's respectable, Tommy—I *know*: and although I've allus kept myself respectable,—for no man can say he ever saw me in a dirty shirt,—still, respectability in business is one thing, and the respectability of retirin' another. That's where the difference is, Tommy: it's a more respectable *sort* of respectability."

"Of course! I always said so. It's a more slap sort—more nobby, by chalks! A man which retires and lives upon his property is an independent swell, and what's more, they can't call him nothing else! That's the point, you know: that's what I look at. They can't say then, you know, he keeps a public-house, while his son keeps a curricule and lives right up!"

"No, Tommy, no: they can't say that, then; nor can the general

say then that the daughter married the son of a man who'd no tin. And yet he might,—that never struck me before,—he might say, you know, I was livin' on her fortune!"

"Well, let him say it! What does it signify *what* he says?"

"Oh! but I shouldn't like him to think that."

"Don't fret yourself at all on that score. *We* shall find plenty of means of proving that what you are living upon is your own. But when do you mean to cut it?"

"Why, I want, in the first place, you know, to look out for a piece of ground to build a house upon."

"What do you want now to *build* a house for?"

"Why, to live in, Tommy—to live in!"

"So I should have guessed, if I'd tried very hard; but ain't there lots of houses you could hire?"

"Oh, I should like to have one of my own!"

"Well, can't you *buy* one?"

"Why, yes: certainly I could do that; but I should like to have one, you know, built in my own way."

"The old tale. It'll never wear out: nothing beats it. But of all the rum dodges that old codgers cultivate, that of building houses to live in themselves is the rummest."

"But what's the odds, it'll allus be worth the money?"

"Always worth the money! Suppose it *should* be always worth the money? The damp walls 'll give you the rheumatiz, and then you'll soon go off the hooks."

"Oh, but I'd have 'em well aired, you know, Tommy! Before I went in they should be as dry as dust."

"Yes, that's what old Habakkak Kokovaks, the Quaker, said, when *he* built *his* house, you remember: *he* was going to have the walls *dry*, but he didn't, and the consequence was he caught a cough, and in less than twelve months, you know, he was in his grave!"

"Oh, but I should see to it all myself! Besides, I've got a house in my brains, that when, please God, anything happens to me, I should like to leave, Tommy, to *somebody* which—if I don't mistake—is now on the road to town! Am I right, Tommy? Eh—am I right?"

"What, about George? Oh! that's right enough."

"I knew it! I knew it yesterday, when I came back from the Hall. I'd a took my oath of it! I'll tell you what I'll do, Tommy. Come, now, I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll bet you a hundred it's a girl!"

"Done!"

"*Done!* If it is, I shall live my time over again; I shall think it's your dear little sister, Tommy, come back to me from heaven. God bless her! I shall."

"Well, if that's the case, I wish it *may* be," said Tom; "although

I thought I should like the first we have to be a boy. But, about this crib, you know, of yours. Do you mean to tell me that you mean to keep Polly and her sweetheart on the tenter-hooks of courtship, till the house you have now in your brains has been built?"

"Why, it won't be long buildin'!"

"It'll be six or nine months before you'll be able to live in it."

"Well, that ain't a very long time for 'em to wait, is it?"

"Oh! let 'em marry at once. Make 'em happy and cut the concern."

"What! before I've got a place to put my head into?"

"You can come and live with us till your house is built, can't you?"

"No, Tommy; that wouldn't answer the contract. The general would say, then, I *was* living on Georgianny's fortune."

"Well, take lodgings then, if you *will* be independent! You don't mean to say you're a going to be nine *months* before you're a gentleman, do you?"

"I *might* take lodgings—I might do that."

"Of course! and live right up at once. Have you spoken to Polly about it?"

"Not yet. No; she has no notion of it; nor has he."

"Then tell 'em at once, and ha' done with it. What's the use of going on? Besides, look here: if the general means to come round at all, he'll come round in less than nine months; and if the dodge of your being a gentleman will help to bring him round, of course, the sooner you are one the better."

"That's true, Tommy; yes, that's true; I see the pint; and I think, without makin' any more bones about it, I'll tell 'em both what I mean to do."

"Of course!"

"I shall astonish 'em; I know I shall astonish 'em—I know I shall—I *know* it! but when I get back—Hullo!" he added. "Tommy, look! Ain't that the general's carriage?"

"Yes!" exclaimed Tom, "it is. Why, what's up now? It's coming here. He shan't see George. I'll not have her struck again!"

"Stop, Tommy; wait a bit, wait a bit, wait a bit! I don't think it's him. It *ain't*; it's her mother; thank God! Run and tell her, Tommy; run up and tell her. I'll go to the door; I'll go, I'll go! Heaven be praised for this!"

Tom, on the instant, flew up-stairs, and found Georgiana—who had seen the carriage approach—in a most frightful state of excitement: she was pale as death, and trembled violently, and must have fainted, had not Tom's announcement, that it was her *mother*, produced an instantaneous reaction.



Meanwhile Todd, who had rushed to the carriage, assisted Mrs. Brooke to alight.

"God bless you, ma'am!" he exclaimed, as he led her in. "God bless you for being so kind. Now," he added, with tears in his eyes, after having conducted her to the sofa, "now, what'll you have to take? Do have a glass of wine! *Do—I am so happy!*" And having produced the wine, he experienced the utmost difficulty in pouring out a glass without spilling it on the table. He did, however, in this succeed; and, conscious of his being unable to hand it, placed it near the edge of the table which he drew near the sofa on which Mrs. Brooke, who had not yet uttered a word, sat and wept.

"Oh! you'll make her heart leap with joy!" he exclaimed. "I'll go and bring her to you at once. But, take the wine—do take it—do; you'll feel all the better! I know you will! She'll not be a minute before she is here!"

Scarcely knowing what he had said, he then rushed from the room, and, on going up-stairs, found Georgiana, still extremely agitated, supported by Mary and Tom.

"Cheer up!" he cried. "Cheer up, my dear! My pretty one! come, cheer up. Think of the pleasure of seeing her here! Think of the happiness in store! I knew she'd come—I knew she would—I *knew* it! Come, cheer up. Now, don't you come down, Tommy; stop you here. And now, dear, come; be a woman: there, come. You'll not be more happy to see her than she'll be to see you. Come."

With a powerful effort to subdue her emotion, Georgiana took his arm, and descended; and when, on entering the room, she perceived Mrs. Brooke with open arms, she flew to her, exclaiming, "Mamma!—*dear* mamma!" but suddenly recollecting herself, sank at her feet.

Todd assisted in raising her, and led her to the sofa; and, as Mrs. Brooke passionately clasped her to her heart, he left the room.

For some time, neither could utter a word. Locked in each other's arms, they gave vent to their feelings, which apparently sprang from a communion of souls.

At length Georgiana exclaimed, tremulously, "Oh! mamma! this is indeed kind—very, very kind. But *you* were ever kind, while I—"

"My dear," said Mrs. Brooke, as Georgiana bowed her head, "I came not either to reproach you or to hear you reproach yourself: I came to give you comfort—all the comfort which the assurance of a mother's forgiveness and unalterable love can impart."

"That is a comfort indeed!" cried Georgiana. "It inspires me with joy. Yet I cannot but feel that I do not deserve your forgiveness. I feel now that I might have confided in *you*; but I felt at the time, that if I did do so, it would be at once death to my hopes."

"My dear George, that which has been done is now irrevocable: I, therefore, do not wish, my love, to dwell upon that: all I am anxious about is your happiness, my child: are you—are you really happy?"

"I require but one thing now, mamma, to render my happiness perfect—and that is—the kind forgiveness of papa. Thomas is devoted to me; he is indeed affectionate—oh! most affectionate; while his father—the dear, kind soul, whom you have seen, loves me fondly. I, therefore, now that *you* have forgiven me, need only the forgiveness of dear papa to render me the happiest of the happy."

"Time, my love, may do much. Let us hope that he may be eventually reconciled. I will not, however, conceal from you the fact of its being vain to expect an immediate reconciliation. The occurrences of the last few days appear to have reanimated his hatred, not only of Thomas, but of the kind old man whom I could not help admiring when he called yesterday."

"But he had nothing to do with it. *He* was not present!"

"I am aware of it, my dear; but when your papa had him seized and dragged with Thomas through the town—"

"Seized. Dragged with Thomas through the town!"

"Have you not heard of it, then?"

"Good Heavens! No, mamma—no."

"Mr. Todd told me of it yesterday."

"But good gracious! when did this occur?"

"Soon after your papa so unfortunately met you."

"Is it possible?"

"As I understand, his horse ran away."

"Yes."

"And Thomas and his father met with it on the road."

"They did; and intended to take it to the Hall."

"Yes; but before they were able to do so the general accused them of having *stolen* the horse, and had them taken by two officers before a magistrate."

"Good Heavens! Well, mamma? Well?"

"Oh! They were *discharged*, of course."

"I never heard a word of it!"

"Nor should *I* have heard a word of it, my dear, if Mr. Todd had not told me, for your papa now seldom converses with me: he did not even tell me that he had seen you."

"Indeed! But surely, mamma, he will not *continue* to persecute us? I remember now: when they went to find the horse they were gone a long time—they were absent some hours; and Mr. Mildmay was sent for in haste! I see it all now. I *then* felt that something had occurred, and now I see it all."

"Well, my love, let us hope that your papa will not pursue the

course of annoyance, which he appears to have adopted. I have but little influence over him, I know; but be assured, my dear, that that little will be exerted with a view to effect a reconciliation."

"Dear mamma, bless you! I *do* feel assured that you will intercede for us."

"I will. And now, my love, I must leave you. The general has no idea of this visit: nor indeed do I wish him to know that I have been here. I have enjoined the servants not to speak of it at the Hall, and, I think, that upon them I can depend. I shall call upon you frequently now, my love! But before I go let me see Thomas."

"Oh!" exclaimed Georgiana, "he will be *so* grateful. I'll not be a moment, mamma: not a moment!" And darting from the room she went up-stairs for Tom.

"Tom, dear Tom," she cried, "mamma wants to see you."

"She does!" cried Tom; "then she's a trump." And he ran down at once with Georgiana.

Mrs. Brooke, as he entered the room, scarcely knew him, but having recognised his features, she extended her hand, and said—"I am glad to see you."

"You don't know how glad, ma'am, we are to see *you*," returned Tom.

"I can guess: I can guess!" she replied; "I hope that you will be happy. Be kind to Georgiana, Thomas: *be* kind to her. You have been—I know that you have been—and you will continue to be kind, will you not?"

"I will!"

"And now not a word about my having been here. George and William I may trust, I think."

"You may, ma'am: I'd trust 'em with untold gold."

"And now, God bless you both. But where is your father? I must say good-bye."

Tom ran up-stairs on the instant, and Mrs. Brooke again embraced Georgiana. "My love," she cried, "all may yet be well. Your papa may yet come round: but impress upon Thomas and his father the expediency of doing nothing under the circumstances to provoke him. Mr. Todd," she added, as he entered the room, "I merely wish to say good morning."

"Good mornin', ma'am, and bless you!" cried Todd, as he grasped her extended hand, and shook it warmly; "may every blessin' be yours!"

"Good morning, Thomas: *good* morning. Remember, Thomas, what I have said."

She then turned to Georgiana, and having embraced her once more, she gave her hand to Todd, who led her to the carriage, when Tom presented each of the servants with a sovereign, and placing his finger on his lips, said "Mum."

"All *right*!" cried Todd, turning to Georgiana in a state of ecstasy as the carriage drove off. "All *right* now; dry your pretty eyes! Come, dry 'em up—dry 'em up! Don't let me see another tear for the next fortnight! I knew she'd come: I knew she would: I *knew* it! And she's been—she's a lady—*she* is—she's what I call a lady: every inch of her, and nothin' but! I knew she was a lady: I knew she was: I *knew* it! Flesh can't deceive me. The very moment I clapped eyes on her at the Hall, I said to myself, you're a trump. I could see it! I *knew* it! And now," he added, as Georgiana waved her handkerchief in answer to a signal given by Mrs. Brooke in the distance, "now come along in, and let's hear all about it!"

By this time Mildmay and Mary had joined them, and when Georgiana had received their warm congratulations, they all returned to the parlour together.

"Now," cried Todd, "*Tommy*! let's have a glass of wine. A fresh bottle, Tommy; and the best you've got in the house."

"Tom, dear," said Georgiana, archly, when the wine had been produced, "what was the name of that magistrate?"

"Magistrate?" cried Tom. "Magistrate!—magistrate?"

"Yes, dear," returned Georgiana, as Todd, turning to Mildmay, made up the most extraordinary face ever beheld; "I mean the magistrate to whom you were introduced the other day: when was it? The day before yesterday."

"Oh, ah, yes! Exactly! Let me see, what was his name? You know, governor, don't you? But that was nothing. It was but a mere introduction, governor, was it?"

"Tommy," said Todd, "it's o' no use: I know it ain't; I *knew* it! The cat's been let out o' the bag."

"Then, who let it out?" cried Tom. "Who let it out? I didn't."

"No, I know you didn't."

"Who did, then?"

"I'll tell you. When I saw Mrs. Brooke at the Hall, I told her all about it, and although I told her not to tell the general what I told her, I forgot to tell her not to tell nobody else."

"Oh, that's it, is it?" cried Tom. "I knew it was all up, the moment George spoke."

"But, look here," resumed Todd, addressing Georgiana; "don't think, because we didn't tell you, that we want to keep anything from you we think you ought to know."

"Not a bit of it!" cried Tom. "Not a bit of it!"

"For my part," said Mary, "I think that men ought to keep nothing at all from their wives."

"They ought to tell us all, dear; ought they not?" said Georgiana, with a smile.

"To be sure they ought. If we don't know all, we don't ought to

put up with it. You may nudge just as much as you please," she added, turning to Mildmay, "but I know I'm right. What do we marry you for? Ain't it to be the same as one? Ought there, I should like to know, to be any secrets between man and wife? What the husband knows the wife ought to know, and what the wife knows the husband ought to know, of course. Don't tell me about keeping us wives in the dark. I say we ought to know *everything*!"

"And yet," said Georgiana, "there are circumstances under which, if we knew all, we should be wretched. The concealment of anything calculated to wound our feelings—when if we knew all we could do no good—is not only venial but kind. If in this case, for example, Mr. Mildmay, when he was sent for, had explained to me what had occurred, I should have been filled with apprehension—I should have endured much unnecessary pain—"

"Well, but don't you feel it just as much now?" exclaimed Mary, whom Georgiana's reference to Mildmay had piqued.

"No, dear," replied Georgiana, "because I now know the result."

"Ah, it's all very well," resumed Mary, "but I know this, that all sly ways I hate."

"Well, now," said Mildmay, "as this point is settled, suppose we proceed to another. Let's discuss something else. By the way," he added, turning to Todd, "I'd no idea of your being so perfect a ladies' man. I saw you conduct Mrs. Brooke to her carriage with an air of surpassing elegance."

"Of course!" cried Todd, smiling. "Why shouldn't I? Eh? I'll back myself to hand a lady to her carriage against all mortal flesh! I know I can do it; I know I can: I *know* it! Especially a lady like that; because she is a lady; and nothing but a lady. She's a lady which knows things, and that's more than every lady can say. But, lor, my dear," he added, addressing Georgiana, "how happy I am she's been here, to be sure! I suppose she didn't say much about the general, did she?"

"Not much," replied Georgiana, "not much. She did, however, tell me to beg of you to do nothing at all likely to provoke him."

"We'll not do that, my dear—we'll not do that."

"Not a bit of it," cried Tom. "More the t'other."

"Has the lawyer sent that letter yet, think you?" said Todd, addressing Mildmay in a whisper.

"Oh, yes," said Mildmay, "I saw it despatched. But there's nothing in that likely to provoke him."

"I hope not—I *hope* not."

"Be sure of it!—I took care of that."

"But what is all this about the magistrate?" cried Mary. "There's something in it, of course; I don't know whether I *ought* to know; because I sometimes think I don't ought to know anything! But if it's not *too* great a secret, and as William appears to have been

mixed up in it, why, perhaps, I *may* know just a little about it. But don't tell me if I don't ought to be told: for goodness' sake don't do that!"

"The fact is," said Tom, as Mildmay sat biting his lips, "when we found the general's horse, you know, which bolted away—you know all about that—we took it to the governor's stable, and while it was being rubbed down, you know, the general came in, and we went before a magistrate to tell him where we found it."

"To tell him where you *found* it!" cried Mary, "what necessity was there for that? Couldn't the general be satisfied without having you up before a magistrate? He surely didn't mean to insinuate you *stole* it, did he?"

"He meant," replied Tom, "to insinuate something very like it."

"He did! Then, if I'd been you, I'd have scratched his very eyes out."

"Mary! My dear!" cried Mildmay.

"I don't care! I would! It's very well he hadn't me to deal with. If he had—"

"Mary!" cried Mildmay, "for Heaven's sake do not be absurd."

"*Absurd*, indeed! Is it absurd for one man to charge another with stealing his horse? Is it absurd for him to be taken before a magistrate *upon* such a charge? Now, is it, Mr. Todd? I'll put it to any one, whether it is or not? Do you think it absurd, Mr. Todd: now *do* you?"

"My dear lady," said Todd, "I shall be happy to take a glass o' wine with you. Argument's very good, I know, but I must say I do think that—when we come to choice—a glass of wine *like* this is better. And now," he added, "who's for a drive this fine mornin'?"

"I should like a drive, much," said Georgiana.

"Then we'll go. I'll tell you how we'll manage it, Tommy; Mr. and Mrs. Mildmay can go in the curricie, and we'll have the pony pheaton; that is, you know, me and Georgianny and you. What say you, Mr. Mildmay? You'll join us, of course?"

"I shall be most happy to do so."

"Then you and me, Tommy, 'll go and have a look at the horses: come along."

"Well," said Georgiana, when Tom and his father had left the room, "we may as well go at once and put on our things, dear."

"I don't care if I don't go out at all," returned Mary, tossing her head with an air of independence.

"Nonsense, dear! But, of course, you'll go; the morning is so delightful. Make her go, Mr. Mildmay."

"*Make* me!" cried Mary, with a sneer.

"You *know* what I mean," said Georgiana, smiling. "But you'll accompany us, of course. I have more to do than you have, and,

therefore, I'll run up at once, for these desperate gentlemen, I know, do not like to be kept waiting."

"*Make me!*" repeated Mary, as Georgiana withdrew. "*Make me, indeed!* Well, I'm sure, what next?"

"I wish to Heaven!" cried Mildmay, "you'd not make yourself so ridiculous! You never see Mrs. Todd act in this manner."

"Mrs. Todd! Oh, of course not! Oh! dear me, no. Mrs. Todd's everything: nobody's like Mrs. Todd. Mrs. Todd this, and Mrs. Todd that, and Mrs. Todd the other; it's all Mrs. Todd. I can't talk like Mrs. Todd, I can't walk like Mrs. Todd, I can't dress like Mrs. Todd: I can do *nothing* like Mrs. Todd; Mrs. Todd is perfection, of course—all perfection, and, therefore, I'm not at all like Mrs. Todd."

"I must say that I wish you were a little *more* like her."

"Of course you do. Oh, of course! You can take her part; but you can't take mine; you can see me browbeaten, and not say a word; but you can strike a man *down* who attempts to touch her; I'll not put up with it; I will *not* put up with it, and so you needn't think it, Mr. Mildmay."

"Mary!" cried Mildmay, sternly, "you and I must come to an understanding! But go and put your things on, and do not provoke me to say more."

"Provoke you to say *more*, indeed! I think you've said enough, and more than enough. But I'll *not* put up with it! And, as to an understanding! Understand this, that I'm not going to play second fiddle to Mrs. Todd."

"Second—*nonsense!*"

"No, nor to fifty Mrs. Todds. I'm as good as her any day, I know, *although* I don't play the piano."

"Mary—*will* you put your things on?"

"No, I shan't. Since it's come to *this*, I shan't go at all."

"As far as my own feelings are concerned, I do not care whether you go or not."

"No, I know you don't: I know that! I know you don't care a bit about me!"

"But," continued Mildmay, "as *I* have some respect for the feelings of our friends, I expect that you *will* go—"

"And so you may expect. You care for everybody's feelings but mine. *My* feelings are nothing!"

"You'll make me angry, Mary—exceedingly angry."

"Angry! Well, I'm sure! I suppose I'm to put up with *everything*, and not say a word! But I won't. If you think I'll be treated in this cruel manner, you're mistaken, *I* can tell you."

"You know that I am anxious to treat you most kindly: you know that I ever have treated you kindly; but if you imagine that

kindness can spring from the indulgence in such an ill temper as this, let me tell you, Mary, that *you* are mistaken."

"I have *not* an ill temper. I deny it. My temper's as good as Mrs. Todd's, any day in the week, *I* know!"

"I wish it were."

"I *know* it is! But if you flatter yourself that I'm going to put up with it, you're just deceived, let me tell you that."

"I begin to fear, Mary, that I *have* been deceived."

"I suppose I'm to be treated, then, like a common servant, and not say a word! But I won't. You want to break my spirit; I *know* that's what *you* want: but you shan't, I'll take good care of that! You think you can treat me just as you please, because I've got no one to take my part. If my father," she added, bursting into tears, "were alive, you wouldn't do it. It's all because I haven't got a father to protect me."

"You know that in that I found an additional motive for treating you with tenderness, Mary. But come, *be* a good girl. There, now, run up and dress."

"I won't: I won't go out at all."

"Really, Mary, you are the most provoking creature I ever met with. I will, however, say no more, now; but if you persist in not going, I shall, during their absence, Mary, talk to you severely."

He then left the room, and proceeded to the stables, where he remained with Tom and his father until the horses were in, and when, on his return with them, he found Mary *ready*, he took her aside, and affectionately kissed her.

It was about this time that Mrs. Brooke reached the Hall, and having inquired for the general, found that he was out. She had, however, scarcely ascertained the fact, when he returned, and, with an expression of ferocity, entered the room in which she was sitting.

"Where have you been?" he demanded.

"I have been," she replied, "for a drive."

"*Where* have you been?"

"May I know why you ask?"

"Answer me!"

"I do not understand the assumption of this tone, nor can I endure it."

"Will you, or will you not, tell me where you have been?"

"I have been round by the Newmarket road."

"You have made a call."

"I have."

"Upon whom?"

Mrs. Brooke, whose spirit affliction had subdued but not destroyed, nerved herself, and firmly replied, Georgiana!"

"And how *dared* you to call upon her?"

✱ "Dared, General Brooke!"



"Ay, dared!"

"How dared I to call upon my child?"

"Yes, madam; I hold it to be the height of *daring* to call, when you knew how I *hated* the set."

"If you are no longer a father, sir, I feel that I am a mother still."

"A mother! you are *my wife*, madam, and, as a wife, *bound*—instead of acting in defiance of me—*bound*, I say, to obey my commands."

"You will recollect, sir, that I have received no commands on this subject."

"Then receive them *now*!"

"General Brooke, we have been married more than five-and-twenty years, during the whole of which time I have endeavoured to act in obedience with your wishes; but when a husband commands a mother to abandon her child, he cannot expect to be obeyed."

"But I insist upon your calling upon her no more. If you do—in defiance of me, madam—you no longer remain in my house!"

"There was a time when such a menace would have wounded my feelings deeply; but that time has passed!"

"Then do you mean to tell me that you *will* call?"

"I do."

"Beware, *beware*; or we part for ever."

"We can scarcely be separated more effectually than we are."

"I now see distinctly how it is. I never imagined it before; but now I see clearly that you, with Rachel, promoted this detestable marriage."

"You wrong me. I think you *know* that you wrong me. If I had had the slightest knowledge of what was about to take place, I should have endeavoured—by all the means at my command—to prevent it. But I had *not*, and I do believe that you know I had *not*."

"*Why* would you have endeavoured to prevent it *then*?"

"Because I should have conceived it to be a most unhappy match."

"Why then do you countenance it *now*?"

"Not only because it has been consummated, but because I find that she is—or would be, were it not for your persecution—happy."

"Happy! with such a low, blackguard set—bah!"

Low as they may be, they have hearts, of which *some* of their superiors cannot boast the possession."

"I well understand the sneer, madam, but despise it! *You* can appreciate them, I can't. You can enter into the feelings of the *scum*. You are therefore fit only to associate with them. It is but

another illustration of the old apophthegm: 'Birds of a feather *will* flock together!'"

"Has General Brooke forgotten that he is a gentleman?"

"No, madam."

"I feared that he had, knowing that he forgot the other day that he was a man."

"What mean you?"

"You struck Georgiana—wantonly *struck* her! *was* that the act of a man? Oh! make atonement for that, and the unwarrantable persecution to which you have subjected those with whom she is now connected, by extending your forgiveness to her."

"Never! Nor will I cease to pursue them. I'll stick to them while I have life. And, mark me, madam—the threat is not an idle one—if ever you dare to go near them again without my express consent, we separate!"

"Sir, the prospect of a separation, as I intimated before, has now no terrors for me!"

"This lofty bearing, madam, does not become you."

"It becomes me, and every one, to resist tyranny. There was a time when such a prospect would have driven me mad. There was a time when I would not have been separated from you for worlds. But, *now*, what is there to render the contemplation of such a prospect painful? What pleasure does your presence impart? shut out as we are from all society—for you will not allow me to associate with a soul—and hearing you speak only in a spirit of bitterness—for your irascibility is perpetual—what cause have I to dread a separation? I can endure the seclusion; I can endure the contempt with which you treat me one day, and the violence with which you assail me another: I can endure all this, and even more; but when I am imperatively commanded to abandon my child—my only child—that is beyond all endurance: I cannot, *will* not, cast her off!"

"Then, I say again, *beware!*" cried the general, who continued to pace the room with the expression of a fiend. "If you *dare* again to visit this hateful set—and I shall be certain to know it, if you do—you never again, while I have *breath*, enter a house of mine! Reflect upon this—reflect upon it deeply; and that, in the full assurance, that, whatever may be the result of the course I shall pursue, my resolution is immovably fixed!"

Mrs. Brooke said no more: she withdrew from the room—but with the firm determination to brave all, rather than consent to abandon her child.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## MILDMAY AND MARY RETURN TO TOWN.

THERE can be no doubt that, when wives are, in a pecuniary sense, independent of their husbands, there is in the chain of matrimony one weak link ; and that, albeit the links of love, esteem, sympathy, convenience, association, and reputation may be, throughout life, sufficiently powerful to preserve that chain without the strength of this particular link being tested, should all the others be so far reduced as to render the connexion dependent upon it, its weakness becomes at once abundantly manifest, if even it should not immediately snap.

MRS. Brooke was independent of the general ; in this sense, completely independent—having, in her own right, amply sufficient to enable her to live in a state of affluence. Still, had the strength of those affections which had long bound her to him remained unimpaired, she would have held the existence of this species of independence to be a poor, a most unworthy excuse for separating from him ; but when she found that threats, violence, neglect, and contempt, had subdued the feelings with which she had been inspired—when she perceived that the spirit of tyranny had sprung from the ruins of love and tenderness—she tested the power of this one link, and found that it might be, without an effort, broken.

She wished not, however, to break it herself : she would not voluntarily separate from him ; but seeing nothing appalling in the prospect of a separation, she continued to visit Georgiana, while he, although conscious of it, acted, as a matter of expediency, as if the fact had been to him unknown.

That these visits were a source of intense delight to Mrs. Brooke and Georgiana, may be conceived : they felt that they had never before so fondly loved each other ; and while Tom was happy to see them reconciled, Todd, at every meeting, shed tears, and spoke of his beautiful daughter in heaven.

“ Oh ! ” he exclaimed, at one of these affectionate interviews, “ oh ! what a comfort—what an-out-and-out comfort it is, to have a child one could almost eat for love. If my little angel—God bless her !—had lived, she and George would have just done to run in a curricule. I sometimes think, when I’m sittin’, and lookin’, and ruminatin’ quiet, that she is George, and George is her. I can’t get it out of my head : they’d have been so much alike ; the same face, the same nose, the same smile, the same go of the hair, the same figure—”

"And the same lips and eyes!" cried Tom; "lips which seem to say, 'come and kiss us!' and eyes which appear to add, 'don't be afraid—come, you may if you like!'"

"Yes, Tommy, yes," replied Todd, as Mrs. Brooke, Georgiana, and Mildmay smiled, "everything, Tommy, exact."

"Then," said Tom, "she'd ha' been an out-and-outer!"

"*He's* a husband, if you like!" whispered Mary, who was standing with Mildmay at one of the windows. "He's something like a husband. I never have compliments paid *me*—but I'm nobody."

Mildmay shook his head, and smiled.

"Oh, of course! I'm only fit to be laughed at. I know that, of course! But I'll not put up with it." And having curled her lip into an expression of contempt, she immediately quitted the room.

Mildmay, who felt that he ought, if possible, to put a stop to this species of folly, which had really become intolerable, followed; and on entering the room into which she had bounced, said: "Mary, sit down."

"I *shan't*!" cried Mary, who snatched off her pelerine, and tore it into ribbons.

"Sit down," repeated Mildmay, as he took her hands, and placed her upon the sofa. "Sit down."

"Let go my hands, sir, I desire you!—how dare you—I'll scratch your very eyes out, sir! Let go my hands!"

"I shall hold them, Mary, until this bad passion has been subdued."

"Let go!" she exclaimed, while struggling; "let go!—if you don't, I scream ten thousand murders! Will you, or will you not, let go my hands?"

"No, Mary; no, I will not," he replied. "They shall remain thus until you are calm."

"What! do you think I'm going to submit to this? Do you think I'm going to be cowed down thus?—do you think I'm going to be treated in this way? No! I wouldn't do it for the best man that ever trod. I dare say, indeed! Well, I'm sure!—what next, I wonder?"

"Mary, hear me."

"I won't hear—I won't hear a word! Let go my hands, sir—*let go my hands!* Ah, you wouldn't do so," she added, bursting into tears, "you wouldn't do so, if I'd a father to protect me; you *know* you wouldn't, and *everybody* knows it. You're a brute to me, you know you are. You're only cruel because you know I've nobody to take my part."

"Cruel!" said Mildmay, releasing her hands, "I would be kind to you, Mary—most kind."

"Of course!—oh, very kind: oh, yes, *very*."

"Mary, Mary! this will never do."

"Do—no, it won't do; I'll take care it shan't do!"

"If this wretched temper be not at once subdued, it will very soon get the upper hand."

"That's what *you* want to get; *you* want to get the upper hand; but you shan't, I'm determined, and so you needn't think it."

"Why, how is this, Mary? *Before* marriage, you were all gentleness. Has marriage, *alone*, produced this change? Is it to be ascribed solely to the fact of your being now secure? Mary, the pursuit of this course will engender thoughts which I have no desire to entertain."

"It's all very fine for you to talk about change; but there's no change in me."

"No change! Why that's worse and worse. No change! Am I then to understand that you before marriage studiously concealed your real nature?—that deception was your aim?—that you acted the part of a hypocrite, Mary? Am I to understand *this*?"

"No, I'm no hypocrite, and never was a hypocrite; and what's more, I'm not to be insulted by being called such a low vulgar name."

"What but hypocrisy was it, Mary—assuming that you are not in reality changed—what but hypocrisy prompted you so frequently to declare that you were as you ever would be in my hands—that by me you would ever be guided—that my wish should always be yours—that if affection and obedience *could* secure my love, I should love you fondly for ever? What was it but hypocrisy?"

"It wasn't hypocrisy! I don't care a bit about what you say; I know it wasn't hypocrisy."

"Then you must be changed, Mary—changed from a calm, quiet, gentle, devoted girl, into an absolute termagant."

"I'm *not* a termagant!—and, what's more, I *won't* be called such names."

"A termagant, Mary, is a scolding, quarrelsome woman—a woman with whom no man can live happily."

"Perhaps you'd like me to have a separate maintenance!"

"A separate *nonsense*, Mary! You make me quite angry with you."

"But if I had a separate maintenance, and Mrs. *Todd* had a separate maintenance, you'd be all right of course, then: you'd both be all right."

"What is it you mean? What would you insinuate?"

"Oh! I can see."

"See what? What is it you imagine that you can see? Surely you are not jealous?"

"Isn't it enough to make flesh and blood jealous to see such goings on?"

"What goings on? What do you mean? You have just as much reason to be jealous as I have."

"What! jealous of *me*? Well, I'm sure! Jealous of *me*, indeed! What next, I wonder."

"I said that I had just as much cause to be jealous of you as you have to be jealous of me."

"You didn't! It's false! You said you had just as much *reason*!"

"Tut! Don't be absurd."

"Absurd, indeed! Since you come to that, pray what reason have you to be jealous of me?"

"I have no reason to be jealous!—nor have you the slightest."

"Haven't I!"

"What reason have you?"

"I know all about it. I hate such ways. Sly as you both are, you can't deceive me."

"I have no desire to deceive you, Mary, although I fear that you have deceived me grossly."

"In what respect, I should like to know? Me deceive *you* indeed!—Well, I'm sure."

"I have really no patience with you, Mary. What *am* I to do with you? How am I to make you conscious of your conduct being silly in the extreme?"

"Don't trouble yourself! I know all about it! I always *was* silly—compared with Mrs. Todd!"

"Mrs. Todd is a lady."

"Of course she is. And what am I, I should like to know?"

"You are my *wife*, Mary; and since I *must* alter my tone—for I find that you are one of those upon whom kindness has no other effect than that of making them the more unworthy of kindness—let me tell you that you are a wife from whom I shall expect the most implicit obedience. Tyranny in every shape I abhor; you, therefore, need not fear even the semblance of tyranny; but as I will *not* be perpetually tortured, I am resolved to exact from you all that a husband is justified in exacting from a wife, and if I find that you adhere to the vulgar course you have adopted, you and I must part."

"I know how it is," said Mary, bursting into tears again. "I know very well how it is; all this is because I can't play the piano."

"Nothing of the sort, Mary—nothing of the sort. But consider, Mary, when I married you I was led to believe that happiness would follow: I did not—I had no right to expect a continued succession of quarrels! Do your duty and I will do mine. Subdue these passions; control this temper; regulate your conduct, and all will

be well. As regards Mrs. Todd, you have wronged her, Mary—ungratefully wronged her; I believe her to be as virtuous as you are; but as you appear to have inspired this feeling of jealousy, we leave this place to-morrow.”

“Not to-morrow, William; we can’t leave to-morrow.”

“To-morrow, Mary, we leave.”

“But, dear me, what excuse can we make?”

“The letters I received this morning will supply me with a sufficient excuse.”

“Well, but you said you wouldn’t go before Thursday.”

“I did intend to remain until Thursday, but now I shall write home to-night, and to-morrow morning we return to town.”

“But I can’t go to-morrow morning.”

“You must and shall go, Mary! Since I find that you cannot appreciate kindness, I must see what firmness can effect.”

“Forgive me, William,” said Mary, as she wept, “please forgive me. I did not mean to say all I *have* said. I know you’ve been kind—I know you have; but pray don’t leave to-morrow.”

“Mary,” said Mildmay, with tears in his eyes, “you know how dearly, how fondly I love you—”

“I do,” she exclaimed, “I do.”

“Why, then, do you torture me thus?”

“I know it’s wrong; I know it is; but come, forgive me; do forgive me. You will not leave to-morrow, now? I don’t think there’s anything wicked at all between you and Mrs. Todd, but I can’t help feeling that she robs me of every compliment you pay her, that she deprives me of every kind word, of every look, of every smile, of every little attention that she receives from you. I want you all, William; all to myself. I ought not perhaps to complain of your politeness to her, but I can’t bear it.”

“Very well; then say no more on the subject; the thing is settled; to-morrow we return.”

He then left her for the purpose of announcing this, his fixed determination, to Tom and Georgiana, of whom Mrs. Brooke was about to take leave; and having, with the rest, seen her into her carriage, he said, with all the gaiety he could assume, “I find that I must go to town to-morrow.”

“Ducks!” cried Tom, “you don’t mean that.”

“To-morrow!” exclaimed Georgiana. “Oh, you really must not think of going to-morrow. Besides, you said Thursday; and then I thought you might have been prevailed upon to stop another week.”

“Oh, you won’t think of going to-morrow,” observed Todd, “it’s all a pack of stuff. *You* can do the trick,” he added, turning to Georgiana. “You can do it; don’t let him go.”

“I really must,” returned Mildmay. “I appreciate your polite-

ness, of course, and you will believe that I am sorry that circumstances have occurred to induce me to leave you so soon, but—”

“*But!*” cried Todd—“now never mind the *but*. Tommy, take away his boots; that’s the only way to serve him, Tommy; take away his boots; don’t let him have a single individual blessed pair to put on in the mornin’, and then, you know, he *can’t* go.”

“If even he were to do so,” said Mildmay, smiling, “I think that, if you knew all, you’d lend me a pair of yours.”

“Lend you a pair,” cried Todd, grasping his hand; “I’d lend you anything in life, because I like you. There’s nothin’ I wouldn’t lend you rather than stand in your way; and so if it’s any business or anything of that, why, as I know what business is, all I can say is, you know, that I’m sorry you’re goin’, and that’s all about it.”

“But what does Mary say?” inquired Georgiana. “Is she up-stairs?”

“I left her in the parlour just now,” replied Mildmay, and thither Georgiana immediately proceeded, and found Mary, diligently picking up the pieces of her pelerine, in tears.

“Mary, my dear!” she exclaimed, “how is this?”

“We’re going to town to-morrow,” sobbed Mary.

“So I hear, and I am very sorry for it. But what are these pieces, dear?”

“My pelerine. I was in such a passion when he told me, that I picked it all to bits.”

“Well, never mind, Mary,” said Georgiana, smiling, “which pelerine was it, dear?”

“The one that you gave me.”

“Oh, well, that can soon be replaced.”

“I don’t care about that; but I know he’s no occasion to go without he likes—I know that, well enough.”

“Sometimes, my dear, business of which we do not know the importance—”

“It ain’t business, I know.”

“We have been endeavouring to prevail upon him to stop, but it appears—”

“He might if he liked; I know that very well.”

“Well, never mind, dear. Come, don’t fret about it. We shall soon have the pleasure of seeing you here again. I’ll not let him leave, dear, until he has promised to come down again with you in less than three months. There, dry your eyes, there, and come up-stairs with me. I want, in the first place, to see how you’ll look in a point lace collar, which I have in my drawer; and then, as I wish to make a few little purchases, we’ll order the phaeton at once, my love, and drive to Newmarket together.”

Mary, who well understood what this meant, wept no more; she accompanied Georgiana up-stairs with alacrity, and, while they were



there, Tom and Mildmay were conversing with Todd on the subject of his giving up the public-house.

"You see," observed Todd, after having explained the outline of his views,—“you see, Mr. Mildmay, I should like to come to the pint before you go, because I know you understand things about as well as here and there one. Now, which do you think's the best way to manage it?”

"Have you spoken to them on the subject at all?”

"Not a word. They know no more about it than a brace of unborn babbies. All they know is, they *fancy* I'm goin' to retire, and that's all they do know, for as to who's to have the house after I've left, they've no more notion than nothin'”

"Do you think of giving them the business absolutely?”

"Yes; stock, furniture, and every blessed thing, to let 'em have a fair start.”

"That is generous, certainly; and doubtless this young man, Meadows, is as you have described him, a steady, industrious, persevering fellow; but as sudden prosperity sometimes produces a change in even the dispositions of men, don't you think it would be advisable to let him have the business, the stock, and the furniture, nominally at a fair valuation?”

"Lor' bless you! Why he's as poor as a church mouse. He hasn't a penny to bless hisself with.”

"I said *nominally*. Let the stock and furniture be valued; let him understand that he takes them at this valuation; that you do not wish to have any part of the money down; that you are willing to wait until he finds himself in a position to pay you. Don't you think that would operate upon him as an additional spur to exertion?—that it would cause him to labour to get free, that he might have the satisfaction of saying, 'This stock is now my own.'”

"I see," said Todd. "I see, I see; and when he can pay me, I needn't take the money; I can make him a present of it then; while, on the other hand, you know, if he *should* go wrong—if he should attempt to kick over the traces at all, I should then have the power of pullin' him in, and causin' him to be steady. I see—I see.”

"Yes, that ain't a bad move," said Tom; "anything but; but it can't make no difference to him.”

"Yes," said Todd, "it'll make all the difference to him; it'll get him at once into the habit of savin', and when he thinks he's got only the stock, he'll have the value in hand, besides.”

"Very good! But I mean in the long run, you know—as far as your present self is concerned. As to the move, I agree with you there. Nothing can be more popular. It'll make a man of him before he knows exactly where he is.”

"And now," observed Todd, "the next pint of the compass is, which is the best way to break it to 'em?”

"You intend, of course," said Mildmay, "to do it at once?"

"Why, the sooner it's done the better. Shall we go over now? I've no right, I know, to bother you with my affairs, only I think if you are present, you'll be able to put a word in, you know, here and there."

"Oh! I'll go with you with pleasure, if you wish it."

"Shall I tell 'em, then, to put the horses in?" inquired Tom.

"Yes, do, Tommy, do," replied Todd, "there's a trump."

"Are you gentlemen going out this morning?" inquired Georgiana, who entered the room at this moment with Mary.

"We're only going to the governor's crib," returned Tom.

"Mary and I are going very near."

"Then we'll make a jovial party, and all go together. How shall we manage it?"

"I'll drive the ladies," said Todd, "and then you and Mr. Mildmay can go in the curriole."

"What!" cried Georgiana, with a smile, "and this the last time I shall have the pleasure of taking a drive with Mr. Mildmay until he revisits us! You surely would not separate us so."

"Well," said Todd, as Mary's lip involuntarily curled, "I'll tell you what, Tommy; you take Bob, and then Mr. Mildmay, and me, and the ladies can go in the phaeton together. Will *that* do?"

"Just as you like," replied Tom, "and the rest in halfpence: it don't make a mite of odds to me. Settle it all among yourselves, and I'll go and order the horses."

"Well," said Todd, as Tom left the room, "now let's have a glass of wine together. If I ain't sorry you're goin', Mr. Mildmay, flesh was never sorry yet."

"He's no call to go, without he likes," observed Mary.

"Business, my dear lady, I know, is business; and business *must* be attended to. Business first, and pleasure after, allus was my motto, and I know it's right—I know it. And now, allow me to offer you a glass of sherry. Will you take a biscuit with it?—but don't; we'll have a nice bit o' lunch at my place."

He then presented a glass of wine to her, as Mildmay handed a glass to Georgiana, and when Tom had rejoined them, and drunk all their "jovial good healths," they proceeded in the order prescribed to Newmarket.

"Now," said Todd, as they entered the town, "you're goin' a shoppin', you say: very good. Now, we've got a little business to settle, and as we shall have done it by the time you've done yours, you may as well come to my place, and I'll have something nice for you to take. You can come in, you know, through the yard, and then nobody'll be none the wiser; but I shall be on the look out. And now, where do you want to get down?"

"We may as well get out here," said Georgiana.

Todd pulled up at once, and when Mildmay had assisted the ladies to alight, he resumed his seat and left them.

"Well, Polly," said Todd, having entered the house, "how do you get on, my lass?"

"Oh! very well," replied Polly.

"That's right. Now look here: send to the White Hart, and see what they've got nice: if they've nothing, send to the Rutland. Mrs. Tom and another lady are coming here directly; do the best you can; you know what they'll like to have for lunch. And look here, Polly, where can I send for young Meadows?"

"What, Samuel?" said Polly, tremulously.

"Of course. There, don't blush like that; I want to see him—where is he?"

"At the shop, I believe."

"Then send for him; I want to have a little conversation with him. Send for him at once, but don't let that put the *lunch* out of your head. The lass is over head and ears in love," he added, as Polly, with an expression of bewilderment, withdrew, "and I believe he's just as much in love with her. Perhaps they *won't* be surprised when they come to know all; their nerves 'll be a *little* astonished, it strikes me. And now, Mr. Mildmay, I want you to taste a glass of sherry which hasn't seen the light for twelve year. I say, Tommy, you know that white door, at the end of the cellar, there, don't you?"

"I don't exactly know it," replied Tom, "but I shall find it out."

"Well, I wish you'd take the key, then, and get a bottle out of that place, Tommy, while I mind the bar."

"All right," cried Tom, who took the key, and having found out the door in question, brought a bottle up.

"Now," said Todd, as he drew the cork, "just tell me what you think of this, will you? Here you are," he added, having filled a glass, "now, how do you like that, eh?—how do you like it?"

"It appears to me," replied Mildmay, "to be splendid!"

"Splendid! I believe you—there ain't a finer glass of wine in England."

"This *is* slap!" cried Tom. "Send I may live, this *is* popular."

"Eh, Tommy—eh?" said Todd. "That's *wine*, that is—that's what I call *wine*. Now, I'll tell you what I want, Mr. Mildmay: I want to make a friend of mine a present of six dozen of it, and as you're goin' up to-morrow, you may as well take it with you."

"I shall be happy to take charge of it," said Mildmay; "I'll see that it's safely delivered."

"If you don't, I'll never forgive you!" cried Todd, with a smile.

"It's for you to drink my health in, while you're away."

"Upon my honour," said Mildmay, "*indeed*, I do not wish it : you load me with obligations."

"Now, don't say a word. I shall have it securely packed up in a hamper, and when you get in the coach, that shall be above you."

"Well, but—really, I know not what to say—let me beg of you, at all events, to pack but *one* dozen."

"It's of no use ; six you shall have. The other six goes to the Box, for Georgiana. Well, Sam !" he cried, as Meadows appeared at the bar. "Come in ; I want to have a little talk with *you*. Now, in the first place," he added, "bring yourself to an anchor, and just tell us how you like this glass of wine."

"Much obliged to you," said Meadows, who did not feel himself quite at home ; "a glass of ale will do for me."

"Have a glass of *wine*, I tell you, and don't be so modest ! And now," he continued, when Meadows had emptied his glass, "how are you and Polly getting on ? You can speak your mind here. This gentleman knows all about it. Do you still wish to marry her ?"

"Yes, I do indeed."

"Then it is to be a match ?"

"I hope so."

"And she's in the same mind, I suppose ?"

"Yes, sir."

"How do you know ?"

"Oh, I know *her* mind, sir, as well as I do my own."

"Well, I dare say you do—on that subject at least. But I say, Sam, how would you like to keep a public-house ?"

"I should like to do anything in the world, sir, to get an honest living ; but a public-house is a cut above me, sir, because I've no money to take one."

"Well : now look here ; I'll come to the point at once, instead of beating about the bush, Sam. Polly's a good girl ; that you know ; she's been very attentive, and I should like, you know, to do something for her, and as you're a steady young fellow, which I never knew nothing at all wrong of, I should like to do something for you both. Now, I'm goin' to retire, and I'll tell you what I'll do, Sam ; I'll put you both into this house."

"But where's all the *money* to come from ?" cried Meadows, with a sudden expression of amazement.

"Never you mind that. Hold hard a bit. If I put you in, I put you in ; and if I say I will, I will. We shall come to the money affair by-and-by. The question is, Sam, do you think you should like it ?"

"Like it, sir ! Why, we should both be so *grateful* to you, we shouldn't know what in the world to do with ourselves."

"All you've got to do is to be steady and attentive and if you mind what you're about, I'll make a man of you. What you don't know about the business Polly can tell you, and what she don't know I'll tell you both. And now, about the money. But," he added, referring to Mildmay, "as this gentleman can explain it to you better than I can, he'll tell you how it is to be done."

"Well," said Mildmay, as Meadows bowed and listened attentively, "the plan proposed is simply this: you will take the stock and furniture at a fair valuation, and Mr. Todd will wait—if he finds that you are attentive—until you are able to pay the amount."

"I'll never press you," cried Todd, "depend upon that, if I find you're goin' on right. All I want is to see you get on. Here's a good business for you, and all you have to do is, to take particular care of number one, and remember that rich men ain't made by the money that's got so much as they are by the money that's saved, and now you understand all about it, don't you?"

"I do, sir; I do," replied Meadows, as the tears started into his eyes; "but I don't know how to thank you."

"Then, don't try to do it. I know what you mean, and that's enough. And now you can marry as soon as you like; next week, if you like; the sooner the better. But don't say a word to Polly now. She's got business to attend to. Wait till we're gone. We shall be off in an hour, and then you can come, you know, and spend the afternoon with her here. Now, take another glass of wine, and cut it."

"Not any more, I thank you."

"Have another, I tell you, and drink this here gentleman's health. He's a trump which is goin' to London to-morrow, and there ain't no mistake at all about him."

"I wish you, sir, every joy," said Meadows.

"And I wish you," said Mildmay, "success in return."

"And good health to you, sir," continued Meadows, turning to Todd. "And to you, sir," he added, addressing Tom, "God bless you, sir—God bless you all."

He then most respectfully bowed and withdrew, as Polly announced the arrival of the ladies, whom she had just shown upstairs.

"Bless my life and soul," cried Todd, "I never see 'em pass. Have you got a nice lunch, Polly?"

"Oh, a delicious one."

"That's a good lass. Now, then, Mr. Mildmay, let's go and join 'em. Come along, Tommy,—come along, my boy. I never, in all my life, felt so happy."

"Which," said Mildmay, "affords an additional proof that the acme of happiness springs from the consciousness of having imparted happiness to others."

The lunch was, as Polly had described it, delicious. It was by all highly enjoyed; and when they had partaken of it freely they returned to the "Box," where they dined together, and spent a delightful evening.

Todd had promised to take breakfast with them in the morning, and when he and Meadows—whose gratitude was unbounded—had seen the six dozen of wine securely packed, he kept that promise, and at the time prescribed, Georgiana and Tom rode with Mildmay and Mary to meet the coach, and with many expressions of warm esteem, bade them adieu for three months.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### THE INTRODUCTION OF MAITLAND.

THE letter written by Mildmay and sent by the attorney, had the effect of checking at once the open system of persecution which the general had made up his mind to pursue; but having resolved on effecting Tom's ruin—having resolved on reducing him, if possible, to a state of utter destitution—the spirit of revenge he had inspired prompted the conception of a more secret course, the pursuit of which he fondly hoped would achieve the object in view.

He had never been a gamester; he had never even entered a gaming-house; but knowing the pernicious effects of play, and conceiving that Tom, through his instrumentality, might be seduced into the vortex, he suffered himself to be "picked up," and conducted to a house which at that particular period flourished near the betting-rooms, and almost immediately opposite the White Hart at Newmarket, in the full expectation of meeting one there who would answer his villanous purpose.

The man by whom he had been "picked up" himself, appeared to him to be a highly accomplished scoundrel, it is true, but conceiving that in "the lowest deep" there might be a "lower deep," he had consented to accompany him, in order to ascertain if he really were the most accomplished wretch he could find.

Having entered the house in question, his "friend"—who called himself a colonel, of course!—"Colonel Cartwright"—ordered a bottle of champagne, and assumed the air of a man worth a quarter of a million, at least.

"Do you contemplate making a long stay in this part of the country?" he inquired, for the general was perfectly unknown to him.

"I may be here for years," replied the general; "I know not how long I shall stop."

"Well, it really is a most splendid place for a man of the world to live in : full of interest and excitement."

"Indeed! Well, really since I have been living here I have been extremely dull!"

"It of course depends entirely upon the circle one forms. One man may be gay while living in a village, while another may feel isolated even in the very centre of the metropolis itself."

"That's true," observed the general; "quite true."

"For my part," continued the colonel, "I like to make a friend of every man whom I meet, and as I have met with some choice spirits here, the time has passed delightfully! Why should a man shut himself out of society when it is capable of yielding him so much pleasure? I hold it to be incumbent upon every man to live *while* he lives—to gather honey from every flower in the garden of life, and to contribute his stock to the general hive which the drones have no right at all to enter."

"Very true," said the general; "very, very true. But how do you *manage* to pass your time thus delightfully?"

"Oh! in an *infinite* variety of ways. Shooting, hunting, racing, steeple-chasing, dancing, cricket, quoits, cards, and dice, come into the catalogue; but to give you a rough outline: in the morning I have generally several calls to make, which calls in general lead to some amusement or other; after which I either dine with a party of friends, or have a party to dine with me, and then, if it be not *too* late, I usually drop in here to play at hazard—a game of which I am passionately fond—until it is time to retire to rest. By the way, do you play at all?"

"I have not the slightest knowledge of the game."

"Indeed! You amaze me! However, there is no game comparable with it, if viewed with reference to its simplicity. Perhaps you would like to see it played?"

"I have no particular desire—"

"Oh, we can go up, if we do not wish to play! No notice whatever will be taken of us! We'll just have one more bottle, and then—"

"Suppose we go up at once, and have the other bottle afterwards?"

"Just as you please," returned the colonel. "Perhaps it will be as well. Let us go up at once. Allow me to conduct you."

The general bowed, and "Colonel Cartwright" led him into a splendid room, in the centre of which stood a table laden with counters, notes, and gold, and surrounded by persons who appeared to be deeply engaged in play.

As they entered the room no apparent notice was taken, and even while they stood at one end of the table the players gave them furtive glances only.

"The bank appears to be unfortunate this evening," observed the

"colonel," when he and the general had been quietly looking on for some time.

"I can't exactly understand the game yet," returned the general.

"Then just see me play," said the colonel. "But, in the first place, allow me to explain it all to you;" and taking a pair of dice from the table he showed him the six sevens, and entering into a brief explanation of all he wished him to know, taking especial pains to impress upon him, in order to gain his confidence, that every die which would not *spin* was a false one.

He then played and won, and played again and won, and continued to play and to win, until the general himself played and won, when the colonel conceived the ice to have been fairly broken.

The general again played, and won again: he played, indeed, for some time, and still was a winner; but having been urged to increase his stakes, he in two throws lost all, with ten pounds which he had *not* won.

This was the extent to which he had made up his mind to go, and therefore, turning to the colonel, he said, "Now that I have been fairly initiated, let us go down and have the other bottle of champagne."

"With all my heart, if you'll play no more."

"Why, to-night, of course, I didn't come prepared!"

"Oh, that's of no importance at all! Your I.O.U. will be sufficient for them."

"No; I'm unknown here. Besides, I never like to borrow."

"Then let us go and have the other bottle," said the "colonel"—who knew as well as any man alive how to "nurse" an intended victim—and taking no notice whatever of his confederates, he returned with the general at once to the room below.

"Well," said he, having called for the second bottle, "how do you like the game of hazard?"

"Oh," replied the general, "pretty well, as a mere game of chance!"

"You are like me: the first time that I played I thought but little of it: but you very soon acquire a taste for the game: it soon grows upon you: it soon becomes fascinating."

"Doubtless. Have you been long in the habit of playing?"

"Oh, for years! I first played in India."

"In India!" cried the general, looking at him intently; "in India?"

"Yes."

"In India!" reiterated the general. "Did you know Lieutenant Maitland?"

"Maitland? Maitland?" echoed the colonel, colouring deeply; "Maitland? oh! Lieutenant Maitland—yes!—oh, yes—I knew him."



"Do I mistake?" pursued the general, "or is he now in reality before me?"

The colonel looked bewildered; but, after a pause—during which the general kept his eye firmly fixed upon him—he said, "Is it possible that your name is Brooke?"

"It is."

"Captain Brooke?"

"Lieutenant-general."

"But *the* Captain Brooke—the friend of Storr."

"The same."

"Then I wish that I had still remained in ignorance of the fact, for the knowledge of it recalls to me the time when, while in the warm pursuit of honourable fame, I was struck down, ruined—utterly ruined—"

"By this *fascinating* game of hazard."

"No; not so much by that as by the perjury of Storr! I did *not* cheat him! Now that neither hope nor fear can be supposed to prompt it, this declaration may have some weight. He solemnly swore to that which was *false*, and he knew it!"

"I cannot believe that he *knew* it to be false."

"He *must* have known it. He did know it. That was the blow which struck me to the earth. Although I had lost all—*all* but my honour—I might have recovered myself, but when *that* blow came I was helplessly prostrate!"

"Well, well, do not let us re-open old wounds."

"Whether such wounds be re-opened or not, the poison within them rankles still. Is he in England now?"

"I *believe* that he is."

"Then I must find him out. He has reduced me to what I am, and I must find him out."

"Reduced you to what you are? Well, well, we can understand each other. You are connected with this house, of course?"

"I am; I will be candid with you: I am. And what but gaming had I to fly to? Shunned by every honourable man who knew me, and shut out from every honourable path, I found that I had no other resource."

"Well!" said the general, with the view of reconciling Maitland to the profession he had adopted, "if the thing be conducted in anything like the spirit of fairness, I do not see much to condemn! Skill always will, and always ought, to command an advantage! If you and I—knowing every point of the game—were partners at whist, for example, and were to take every bet that was offered by our opponents, to whom the game was comparatively unknown, the fault would rest with them, if we won, and not with us, notwithstanding we knew that the chances were immensely in our favour."

Men who study a game, certainly ought to reap the advantages of study; if they do not, why should they study at all."

"Very true," said Maitland; "that is quite correct: and it really is the only light in which we are able to view the thing fairly. It applies, moreover, to *all* sporting matters. It is not confined to play! If I obtain any secret information about a horse which convinces me of the impossibility of his winning, am I not justified in betting the odds against him? and if on the other hand I ascertain privately that the only horse that ever had a chance with him is lame, while *he* continues right, am I not equally justified in taking all the odds I can get?"

"Of course!" cried the general; "of course!"

"I speak to you now," pursued Maitland, "as to one with whom, as far as play is concerned, I'll have nothing more to do!"

"Well, I certainly am not, now you know me, fair game. Those who have obtained their money by acts of scoundrelism are the men to look after."

"They are the very men whom I like to nurse; they, your money-lending rascals, and your stuck-up tradesmen. I can work them without a pang: nay, I feel a peculiar pleasure in working them well—a pleasure based upon the recollection of their having worked me."

"By the way, do you happen to know a man whom they call the Squire?"

"The Squire? What, a vulgar-looking, over-dressed dog, who drives a curriole?"

"That's the man."

"I saw him dash into the town yesterday, and the person whom I inquired of, said he was 'The Squire,' which was all the information I could gain. Who is he?"

"I'll tell you: that scoundrel *was* my groom."

"Your groom! Why, how did he get his money?"

"He ran away with my daughter, who had an immense sum in her own right, which he, of course, clutched; and *now* you see how he comes out."

"You amaze me! *He* ran away with your daughter! He certainly is a *handsome* fellow; but his style of dress—his manner. Was her fortune very large?"

"Oh! immense: it was left her by her aunt, who died exceedingly rich."

"I should like to get hold of that gentleman much! You are not—of course, you cannot be—friendly with him?"

"*Friendly* with such a low-bred dog!"

"Of course not: that's perfectly impossible. And, vulgar as he is, I suppose that he imagines himself now to be a very great man?"

"Oh! a man of *immense* importance."

"Just like them. It always was, and, I suppose, always will be the case. 'Set a beggar on horseback—' we know where he'll ride. I must get hold of him. Of course, *you* have no objection?"

"Not I! I should like to *see* him brought down a little."

"I'll do it. Grooms are in general rather wide awake! But I'll manage it. When men of that description fall into our hands, their *vanity* is the greatest enemy they have. But how did he succeed in running away with her?"

"I'll explain: One day, as Storr and I—but—I ought not to have mentioned his name—"

"Never mind that. Go on."

"Well! as we were walking together in my park, we saw this scoundrel kiss my daughter's hand. Julia Storr—"

"Julia Storr? What, that little delicate child of his?"

"She is no longer a *delicate* child: she is now a finely grown girl. She went out with them, but, being a giddy thing, she was riding some distance ahead of them. Well! having seen this, I, at Storr's suggestion, decided on sending her away. She had an aunt living at Malvern. I took her there, and left her, and then discharged this vulgar wretch. Storr got him a situation to go abroad—"

"Artful! *Just* like him. Well?"

"He took the situation, but did not go. He by some means ascertained where she was, and very soon after that married her at Worcester."

"He's no fool, general! Whatever else he may be, he's no fool."

"But the idea of a vulgar scoundrel like that—"

"I see—I understand. He'll require some management; but—it shall be done. *Will* you lend me one of your horses?"

"Certainly."

"I will, if you require it, deposit the value now."

"Maitland, you offend me. You cannot suppose that I imagine for one moment that you would rob me of the horse?"

"But I may sell it; I may sell it to this immense man. You must, therefore, let me know at least what you consider its value to be."

"Very well. It shall be done. When shall I send it, and where?"

"Oh, you may as well send it to the White Hart by one of your servants in the morning, with a note addressed to me!"

"Very good."

"If I should sell it, I'll send you the money; if I should not, I'll send the horse back."

"Maitland, it shall be done."

"Very well. *I'll* work him. But really this is strange! Do you think that when you made the discovery, this girl—this Julia Storr—was in the secret?"

"I scarcely know what to think of it. I sometimes imagine she must have been."

"How old is she?"

"Oh! just of age."

"Ah! I thought she must be nearly of age," returned Maitland, who had conceived a design having reference to Julia, which he studiously concealed, "but this great man; this son-in-law of yours; where does he come from?"

"The wretch was *born* here! His father keeps a pot-house just above."

"A pot-house!" cried Maitland. "Ha! ha! ha!—that's rich. But do you really mean to say that his father keeps a pot-house, while he drives a curriple?"

"Oh! it's a fact."

"Ha, ha, ha! Well may they call him '*The Squire*!' Where does he live?"

"About a couple of miles from the town; and the place in which he lives is yclept '*The Squire's Box*.'"

"Better still!" cried Maitland. "*I'll* find him out. And now," he added, "shall we have one bottle more?"

"I think not, to-night," replied the general. "No, I think not, to-night."

"Let us have one more bottle."

"I'd *rather* not. For these, of course, *I* shall pay."

"What! No. You have already *paid*. But I'll make that right another time. We *must* have another bottle now, or I shall imagine that you despise me," and, having rang the bell, he ordered another bottle up. "I am glad that I have met you," he added, "although the meeting has given me pain. But believe me I was most unjustly treated in that affair by Storr. I stood in his way. He, *therefore*, accused me. Immediately after I was removed he got on."

"That's true, certainly, as far as that goes — quite true. He did get on rapidly, and but for that unfortunate affair you must have preceded him."

"Well, no matter. Now," he added, when the wine had been brought, "let us try this. General Brooke, I drink your health. I feel myself degraded, but—"

"Nonsense!" cried the general, "I'll not hear a word of it! Maitland, may you prosper yet. And now let us talk about something else. In the first place, I'll send the horse over in the morning."

"Do so. You'll address the note, of course, to 'Colonel Cartwright?'"

"Of course. I understand."

"They know me at the White Hart. In fact, I am staying there; but—except, indeed, to the persons who are connected with this establishment—I am almost entirely unknown here. I have not been down more than a month."

"Indeed!"

"But now that I am here, I'll not leave the place until I have brought down the Squire!"

The general now rose to leave, and having cordially shaken hands with Maitland, he, with feelings which may be most easily conceived, returned to the Rutland Arms.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### ADONIS.

THE terms vanity and pride have been held to be synonymous; but the passions are perfectly distinct. The development of pride proceeds from self-love: that of vanity, from love of approbation. Pride prompts us to esteem ourselves highly: vanity leads us to court the esteem of others. It has been said that man is too proud to be vain. A proud man is; but not mankind. One of the chief characteristics of man is vanity; and so commonly is it developed, that were it not for the existence of pride, it might be held to be a passion universally cherished. It is the father of flattery, the friend of falsehood, the patron of hypocrisy. Society would be comparatively pure, if vanity had no existence. Pride is the only counteracting passion we have: the love of praise inspires all but the proud. Men have little desire to associate with those who sink them in their own esteem; but they are always perfectly delighted with those who make them delighted with themselves. The means employed are lost in the effect produced: they will overlook the most egregious species of adulation, if by it their vanity be gratified. Hypocrisy is always demanded by vanity; and he whose supply is equal to the demand ensures the most extensive patronage. Hence flatterers are in every social sphere to be found, who study the character of every man whom they meet, and thus find out his weakest points. If he be a politician, they applaud his views: if a connoisseur of painting, they praise his taste, the artist of whom he is most enamoured, and the school in which he most delights: if he be what is facetiously

termed a patron of literature, they praise his favourite authors, who, of course, must throw all others into the shade : if he be an antiquarian, they laud his research : if he be a soldier, they praise the army : if a sailor, the navy : if a barrister, neither the army nor the navy, nor anything indeed but that brilliant eloquence which must inevitably raise him to the woolsack. They, however, care not what a man really is : they look only at what he conceives himself to be, and *then* work him up into excellence ! Thus vanity fosters hypocrisy, and promotes the cultivation of the modern art of pleasing, of which art the most perfect parasites are the most perfect masters.

Of all this Maitland was perfectly cognisant : he had studied it deeply, and that in a school in which all impressions become indelible. He therefore knew exactly how in this case to act, and when the general's groom had brought the horse in the morning, he hired another and proceeded to "the Box."

"Is Mr. Todd within?" he inquired, on his arrival.

"Yes, sir, he is," replied the servant.

"Very good. Take in my card, and say that I wish to see him, if he be not engaged."

"Colonel Cartwright!" said Tom, when the card had been delivered; "who's Colonel Cartwright? Do you know him, George?"

"No, dear," replied Georgiana.

"Colonel Cartwright! I wonder what he wants. Colonel Cartwright! I never heard of the name before. But never mind, if he wants me tell him to come in."

Maitland was then requested to alight—one of Tom's grooms being in attendance to take his horse—and as he entered the room Georgiana withdrew.

"Mr. Todd," said he, "I presume I have the honour to address."

"My name is Todd," returned Tom, "and no mistake. Take a seat."

"I have taken the liberty of calling," pursued Maitland, "in consequence of having understood that you wished to purchase another horse."

"It's no liberty," said Tom, "not a bit of it. But whoever told you knew nothing at all about it. I've got all I want: I've got four, and a pair of ponies; and that's all I mean to keep at present."

"Then I have to apologise for troubling you; but, if you had wanted another, I have a beautiful grey, with which I'm sure you would have been quite delighted."

"Is there anything particularly spicy about him?"

"There's not a horse like him in this county!"

"Not in *this* county! Then he must be an out-and-outer."

"I wish that you would see him; because, I understand, you know what a horse is."

"I flatter myself I know a *little* about one."

"Then, will you do me the favour to call and have a look at him?"

"Where is he?"

"At the White Hart."

"I'll call; but I've no notion, mind you, of making a purchase."

"That's of no importance. If you don't want him, one of your friends may. At all events, I should like you to see him."

"Very well: then I'll call."

"You have a splendid little box here!"

"Yes; it's a tidy little crib enough."

"Oh! it's an elegant place altogether!—so unique, so compact. Are your stables behind?"

"Yes; 'll you have a look at 'em?"

"I should like to see them much."

"Then, come along.—There you are," he added, on leaving the house. "Them's them."

"And excellent stables they appear to be, certainly!—so convenient, too! By the way, that's a most splendid curricule of yours."

"You have seen it, then?"

"Oh! yes: but I always thought, until the day before yesterday, that you were Sir Gilbert Dashwood."

"What is he anything like me?"

"The resemblance is striking: independently of which, he has just such a brilliant turn-out. You drove into Newmarket the day before yesterday?"

"Yes."

"It was then that I ascertained who you were; and, as they told me that they believed you wished to make another purchase, and that if there was one horse better than another you'd have it, I was induced to come over this morning, for the purpose of letting you have the first offer of one which I'm certain would suit you admirably. Ah!" he added, on entering the stable, "this is the pair you drive."

"There they are," said Tom. "What do you think of 'em?"

"Splendid creatures, certainly!"

"Rayther popular! Eh?"

"They are, indeed, magnificent animals! I didn't expect to see them look so well, while in a state of inactivity; because, your style of driving shows a horse off to so much advantage."

"I'll drive with any man in England!—I don't care who he is!"

"And beat him, too!" added Maitland. "I've seen elegant driving, certainly; but nothing to equal yours. It's a peculiar style: quite a style of your own: at all events, I can't get into it.—You've a sweet pair of ponies here."

"They're rum 'uns, they are—fat as moles."

"They're little beauties, certainly."

"They run along the road like mice. My little wife can do anything with 'em."

"Is that elegant lady, whom I had the pleasure of seeing as I entered, Mrs. Todd?"

"That's her," replied Tom, "and, what's more, she's an out-and-outer."

"She is indeed a most lady-like person."

"She *is* a lady and no mistake; that's her horse, that is; this is mine; and now you've seen all you *can* see, perhaps you'll come in and have a glass of sherry."

"You're very polite," returned Maitland. "I hope that, when we meet again, you'll allow me to return the compliment."

They then re-entered the house, and Tom brought out the wine, a few bottles of which he kept conveniently in the sideboard, and Maitland had no sooner tasted it, than of course he pronounced it excellent.

"Pretty fair," said Tom; "a tidy sherry. But, talk about sherry—*I'll* give you a glass of sherry."

"I beg you'll not open another bottle on my account," said Maitland, as Tom produced a corkscrew.

"Then, I'll open it on my own," returned Tom, who drew the cork, and presented a glass to Maitland. "Now, then, what do you think of that?"

"Oh! this is delicious," cried Maitland.

"That's sherry, that is—that's what *I* call sherry!"

"I *never* tasted so fine a wine."

"That's my little wife's own. The governor sent her six dozen the other day."

"Indeed. Well, I *have* tasted what I *called* splendid sherry, but nothing at all comparable with this."

"Come, wet the other eye?"

"I'm afraid of it."

"Nonsense! *cut* away, and send the bottle here."

Maitland replenished his glass, and said: "Well, when will you come and have a look at this horse of mine?—mine I call it, although it in reality belongs to a friend of mine. When may I expect you?"

"Oh, I don't know," replied Tom. "I've nothing particular to do this morning. I'll tell you what I'll do; I'll ride over with you now."

"If you would do so I should like it all the better."

"Oh, I'll go at once; that'll be the best way; I'll just order the horse, and say where I'm going. I'll be back in a brace of shakes. Help yourself while I'm gone."

"And this," groaned Maitland to himself, confidentially, when Tom had left the room—"this is even-handed justice! Here is a low



bred, vulgar dog, living in affluence, lapped in love and luxury, with all the means of voluptuous enjoyment at his command, while I am, in order to *exist*, compelled to have recourse to the meanest practices of falsehood and dishonour. *Is* this justice? The name is a mockery. Compare us—*compare* us, did I say? Compare ‘Hyperion to a Satyr.’”

“Well,” said Tom, on his return. “But, I say,—come, help yourself.”

“Indeed I am afraid of it.”

“Pooh!—Stuff and nonsense! Let’s have a glass together. Good health to you. I rather *like* you to begin with!”

“And I always appreciate the politeness so conspicuous in a perfect gentleman.”

“Well, it *is* a treat to meet with one of the sort. They’re rather scarce.”

“They are indeed.”

“And yet I don’t see why they should be. What’s the good of sticking ourselves up and making everybody uncomfortable? For my part, I *like* to be pleasant.”

“Of course; I cannot bear to be otherwise.”

“I see you’re just one of my kidney, and therefore you’re the very sort of fellow I like. Here you are,” he added,—“here are the horses. Now, will you have another glass?”

“Not *any* more, I thank you.”

“If you will, you know, you’re as welcome as a prince.”

“I’m quite sure of that.”

“Well, then, have another glass. Come, you must have another.”

“If I do,” returned Maitland, “it will be to drink the health of your amiable lady.”

“You’re a trump,” cried Tom, “and nothing but. Send I may live, if I don’t like to meet a man like you.”

“I said amiable, not as a mere compliment, but because I feel convinced that she *is* so.”

“She *is*, and there’s no mistake about it.”

“How soon we can tell a kind, gentle creature, from one—”

“I believe you. Tell ’em in an instant. There’s a certain sort of a kind of a something about ’em, that tells you what they are with half an eye.”

“You are quite right—quite right. Here’s health to Mrs. Todd: I wish her every possible happiness.”

“Thank you,” said Tom, “you’re a good sort. And now,” he added, having emptied his glass, “I must give you the health of Mrs. Colonel Cartwright. I suppose there *is* a Mrs. Colonel Cartwright?”

“Not yet,” said Maitland, with a smile.

"Then I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll give you the health of her which *is* to be. Come, you *can't* refuse to drink that!"

"You'll make me *tipsy*!" cried Maitland. "I never met with such a humorous fellow in my life."

"I'm a rum 'un of the sort."

"And no bad sort either!" added Maitland. "But *I* never met with such a fellow! However: "Here's the lady that *is* to be Mrs. Colonel Cartwright."

"And now," said Tom, "if you like, we'll be off."

"I think it's time!" returned Maitland, rising. "If I stop much longer I shall be getting into the saddle the wrong way."

Tom laughed heartily on leaving the room, and when Maitland had given the groom half-a-crown, they mounted and rode off together.

"I have been looking," said Maitland, as they proceeded, "at the way in which you ride. How is it that I can't sit a horse like you?"

"Oh! I don't know," replied Tom, "how that is; but you don't ride none so dusty! You sit a horse in a tidy style; but I suppose you're been used to the *military* dodge!"

"Why I certainly have!"

"And that appears, you know, to *me* to be the varmentest style flesh ever invented. *Shake*—shake, shake, shake; *bump*, bump, bump, bump. *No* spring!—not a mite! What's the good of it? It's only fit for old swells which want to shake their fat down. Of *all* the styles of sitting a horse that's the most rotten. But *you* ride a decent stick! I don't see nothing to complain of."

"Ah!" returned Maitland, "I can't ride like *you*."

"Well! perhaps there ain't many that *can*; but I've been used to it from a kid, which makes all the difference. I remember, when I wasn't above a six-year old, riding a feather for Sir Oswald Otway, and won!"

"Indeed!"

"Even at *that* time o' day I could have got backed for style against mortal flesh, and I *don't* think there's many can beat me now."

"I should say not. Then you have been used to the turf?"

"I never rode but that once, and then Sir Oswald asked the governor to let me as a favour."

"But of course you have been in the habit of betting?"

"I haven't had a penny on a race for years. I might have won money: I know I might; but while I was with the governor he wouldn't let me bet, and since then I haven't been much in the way of it. It's no use to bet, you know, unless you enter into it. A man who doesn't make up a book never ought to bet at all."

"That's right: quite right: you are perfectly right. But a man

possessing your knowledge of horses, might, by entering into it, make thousands."

"I believe you."

"What immense sums are made on the turf to be sure."

"Immense sums! it's stunning."

They now reached Newmarket, and as they proceeded down High-street, Tom was constantly engaged in shouting "How do? How are you?" to the tradesmen, who bowed to him respectfully as he passed them. This—even this—to Maitland was wormwood. He, however, concealed every feeling of bitterness, and continued to chat to Tom gaily until they arrived at the White Hart.

"Now," said Tom, having dismounted, "let's go and have a look at this grey."

"Stop," said Maitland, "now you are here; you must lunch with me. What shall I order?"

"But I don't at all think, you know, of buying the horse!"

"Of what importance is that?" inquired Maitland, smiling. "I do not care whether you buy him or not. You forget your *own* hospitality. Now what would you like to have?"

"Well," replied Tom, "*you're* a trump. Let's have some broiled ham and bottled stout."

Broiled ham and bottled stout. Well! Maitland, who felt that he couldn't digest such a meal in much less than a fortnight, nevertheless ordered broiled ham and bottled stout, and then told the ostler to bring out the grey.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Tom, as the grey appeared, which he instantly knew to have been Georgiana's. "Adonis!" he cried, going up to the horse, which pricked up his ears and pawed the ground, and licked his hand, and looked delighted. "Poor old Dony: ha! ha! ha; ho! ho! ho; poor old fellow; ha! ha! ha; poor old boy; you know me, don't you; poor old fellow; ha! ha! ha! Shake hands, old fellow: that's a *boy*," he added, as the horse lifted up his off fore-leg. "Would you like to come and live with me? Poor old Dony. And carry your missis, too? Poor old boy: ha! ha! There," said he, turning to the ostler, "I know what he is: take him in;" and the ostler endeavoured to do so; but the animal reared, and snorted, and plunged, and would *not* be turned from the spot.

"Let go the halter," cried Tom.

"What, let him loose, sir?"

"Loose! ay, loose. I'll manage him. Dony! come along, Dony! come, come along, old boy." And the horse, which before was all fire, followed him like a lamb into the stable.

"Colonel," said Tom, on his return to Maitland, who stood with an expression of amazement in the yard, "you said that that horse was not your own—that he belonged to a friend of yours?"

"Yes."

"And that friend is General Brooke?"

"Yes."

"Then, come along: let's go in and talk the matter over—Now, then," he added, having entered the first room he came to, "this horse belongs to General Brooke, and General Brooke is your friend?"

"He is."

"Do you know me?"

"I know you to be a warm-hearted, straightforward, splendid fellow."

"But don't you know who I was?"

"Not at all."

"Then I'll tell you. I was General Brooke's groom, and the lady you saw—my wife—is his daughter."

"Is it possible?"

"It's a fact!"

"Then I am more glad than ever to know you."

"But you a friend of his, and not know that we were married?"

"The general told me that his daughter was married; but he would not tell me to whom."

"Just like him. He's ashamed."

"Ashamed! What do you mean? Ashamed, indeed! What is there to be ashamed of?"

"That's what *I* want to know. I suppose, it's because I *was* his groom."

"What of that? What does it matter what a man *has* been? I look at what he is. I must talk to him about this."

"I wish you would: not for my own sake—to tell you the truth, I don't care a single button about him—but for the sake of my poor little wife, who is an angel—if ever there was one out of heaven—and who only wants *him* to forgive her to make her as happy as a bird."

"Forgive her!" cried Maitland, "for what?"

"For marrying me in a clandestine sort of way."

"Oh, I see. It was a runaway match, then!"

"Of course!"

"I understand. Oh, I'll talk to him. *He'll* soon come round."

"I'm not quite so sure of that."

"What's the use of holding out?"

"That's what *I* want to know. What's the use of it? It's only making her uncomfortable, and doing himself no good."

"Leave it to me: *I'll* talk to him."

"Well, if you *would*, you don't know how much I should feel obliged to you. Send I may live, if I wouldn't do anything if he'd but say 'It's all right.' As to the horse, I'd give him treble his price for it. What does he ask for it now?"

"Here is his note," replied Maitland. "As you have been candid with me, I'll be equally candid with you. 'Dear Cartwright,' he added, reading: 'I send you the horse by my servant: its value, I believe, to be about fifty guineas. I remain, &c., &c.' You know his handwriting, do you not?"

"Why," said Tom, as Maitland handed the note to him, "I can't say I know much about it."

"Then put it in your pocket. Your good lady, perhaps, will be pleased to see his writing if she cannot see *him*. And now," he added, as the waiter entered with the tray, "let's have something to eat. But isn't stout rather too heavy for you?"

"Not at all," replied Tom; "I like it. But don't you drink it, you know, because I do. I can manage this."

"Then, waiter, let me have a pint of sherry."

Tom then went to work; and, while eating, explained the peculiar circumstance which caused him to be so much in love with bottled stout; and, having at length finished his explanation—which embraced almost everything that occurred between the day he left the general and the day of his marriage—he reverted to the horse.

"Now," said he, "I'll tell you what: I won't say I'll buy him, nor I won't say I won't; but you'll not let him go till you've seen me again?"

"Most certainly not."

"If George would like to have him—that's my little wife—she shall have him. So I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll come over again directly after dinner, and give you an answer—yes, or no."

"Very good; then what time shall I expect you?"

"Oh, we dine at five now: say half-past six."

"I shall be most happy to see you at that time."

"And now," said Tom, "I've got all I can, I'll be off. But send I may live, though, how strange things come round. Who'd ever have thought, when you called upon me, now, that you'd been a friend of the general. How long have you known him?"

"Oh! I've known him for years. I served with him in India!"

"Is that a fact?"

"I knew your good lady too, when she was there."

"You did!"

"Aye, but she would not know me now. She was very young then, very young—scarcely older than another little girl whom I knew there, a companion of hers—little Julia Storr."

"What, Miss Storr, Colonel Storr's daughter?"

"Yes."

"Thunder and lightning, though, how strange! Why she—but I'll tell you all about it when I see you again. *Good* day. I am so pleased to know you, you can't think."

"And I am most happy, indeed, to know you; for if you are not a fine-hearted, splendid fellow, I never saw one."

"And you're about ditto to match," cried Tom. "I'll be with you at half-past six."

He then shook hands with Maitland again and again; and, having mounted his horse, rode direct to his father's.

"Well, Tommy, my tulip," cried Todd, as he entered. "How goes it, my Briton? Eh? Anything up?"

"A slice of luck," replied Tom; "a popolor out-and-out stunning slice of luck!"

"That's your sort. Now, hold hard, Tommy. Now then—what is it?"

"You know, Dony, don't you?—the grey, you know, George used to ride?"

"Yes. Well, Tommy,—well?"

"Well: a gent, you know, comes to the Box this morning, and sends in his card—here you are: '*Colonel Cartwright*,' and says—"

"Stop, pull up a bit, Tommy; who's Colonel Cartwright?"

"Now, have a little patience, will you? Send I may live; can't you wait a *single* instant?"

"Go on: I only asked, you know."

"Well, he comes and says, says he—quite polite and popolor, for he's an out-and-out gentleman, and *no* mistake!—says he, I've got a stunning grey horse, says he, which I think 'll just suit you to a hair—I wish you'd come and have a look at him. Why, says I, I don't want him, says I; I've got, says I, as many as I mean to keep. Then, says he, I've only got to apologise, says he, for taking the liberty of calling. Not a bit of it, says I, don't mention that. I shouldn't, says he, have come over if I hadn't seen you in your curricule the day before yesterday—for then, says he, it struck me the grey would suit you to a turn. However, says he, as you don't want another, all I've got to do, says he, is to apologise. Don't say a word about that, says I; but before you go, perhaps you'd like to look at my stables. I should, says he—"

"A dodge, Tommy, I'll bet a million!"

"Now, hold hard, will you?"

"Cut away; but I know it's a dodge: I *know* it!"

"You know nothing about it. Now, why can't you let me go on?"

"Well, start off again: we shall sec."

"Well, I took him over the stable, and after that, as he was a stunning pleasant fellow, I asked him to have a glass of sherry, which he did; and at last I says, as I've nothing to do, I'll tell you what it is, I'll ride over and look at this grey. So over we

comes, and when the horse was brought out, who should it be but the general's—George's, that was—poor old Dony! I knew him in an instant, and he knew me, and snorted and pricked up his ears, and shook hands quite delighted!"

"Well?"

"Well, when I'd taken him back—for he wouldn't go into the stable without me—I says to the colonel, that horse belongs to General Brooke. Yes, says he, quite astonished at my knowing it, it does; General Brooke's a friend of mine, and wished me to sell it for him."

"Yes," cried Todd, "and if you buy it, he'll say you stole it!"

"No; *will* you shut up a bit? *Will* you be quiet? Do you know me? says I; do you know who I was? No, says he. Why, says I, I was General Brooke's groom, and that lady you saw, my wife, is his daughter! Well, this stunned him above a bit, for the general had told him that George was married, but wouldn't tell him who she was married to."

"Well, that's feasible, as far as that goes."

"Just *like* him. Well, we went in and had lunch together, and talked the matter over."

"Where?"

"Why, at the White Hart, where he's stopping; and the result was, I told him I'd turn the matter over and let him know after dinner, whether I'd have the horse or not."

"Have nothing at all to do with him, Tommy! Mark my words, if you do, you'll be done."

"Why, how do you make that out?"

"How do I make it out! Why, in the first place, how do you know that this horse has been honestly come by? And even if it has been, how do you know that it ain't a dodge of the general's to draw you into a mess? You've been bit once, you know, Tommy! I see it clear."

"No you don't."

"Why look here. You buy this horse. Very well: say you buy it. Directly you get it home, down comes the general with a couple of constables, and says, Now, I've got you; you stole this here horse. No, I didn't, says you; I bought it. I dessay, says he; who did you buy it of? I bought it, says you, of one which said his name was Colonel Cartwright. You can tell that there tale to the marines, says he, and out comes the handcuffs, and off you walks before the very eyes of Georgiana; you try to find the colonel, the colonel has cut it, and you are transported for life."

"You're *almost* too artful to live," said Tom, smiling, "almost—"

"I know I'm right! I know I am! I *know* it!"

"No you don't. Now look here. Suppose I was to buy this

horse to-day—I can prove that the general commissioned Colonel Cartwright to sell it—”

“How can you prove that?”

“Here’s the general’s own note!” cried Tom, as he produced it. “Here you are, you see. He calls him ‘Dear Cartwright,’ and says that he has sent his servant with the horse, and that the price is fifty guineas!”

“Is that the general’s fist?”

“Of course it is. But George ’ll know it. Well, I can prove by this that he sent the horse; I can prove that the colonel had to sell it. I can prove by the men in the yard that I bought it, and if I give him a cheque, I can prove that I paid for it. Ain’t that sufficient? If even he wished it, what hold could the general have upon me?”

“That certainly puts a new face upon the matter. But who is this Colonel Cartwright?”

“Why, he was with the general in India? He knew George there when she was quite a little girl; he knew Miss Storr there, and Colonel Storr, and he certainly is one of the most out-and-out pleasant, polite, gentlemanly fellows you ever met with.”

“Well, but you know, Tommy, you don’t want the horse.”

“No, I know I don’t; but look here, governor. This was the favourite horse of George, and she may like to have it. That’s one thing. The next thing is, that as this colonel has known the general so long, and has so much influence over him, we can’t do better than buy the horse, and cultivate his acquaintance.”

“But will he be friends with you afterwards?”

“Will he? Will he not? Why, he’s one of the best fellows that ever breathed. There ain’t a mite of pride about him. He’s none of your stiff-necked, stuck-up muck! He’s a gentleman—what I call a gentleman—and no mistake. If I buy the horse, I’ll get him to come and dine with us to-morrow.”

“Well, but stop, Tommy, stop. I don’t at all dislike the look of it now, although I did think it was an artful dodge—but let’s go on sure grounds. First of all, there’s two things to be done: we must find out who this Colonel Cartwright is, you know, what sort of a character he bears, and what he’s doing down here, and then we must ascertain beyond all doubt that this note was really writ by the general. Now, I think we can do both these things. I know Charles, the head-waiter at the White Hart, and I know that all he knows he’ll tell me, and say nothing to nobody about it. I’ll therefore go and speak to him now, and then, you know, if it’s all right there, all we shall have to do, Tommy, will be just to go and show the note to George, who’ll tell us whether it *is* the general’s fist or not at once.”



"That'll be *about* it!" cried Tom. "She'll know in a moment. But don't let the colonel see you, governor."

"Why, he wouldn't know *me*, if he should."

"Well, perhaps not; but tell Charles, you know, to keep it dark."

"All right: leave it to me," returned Todd, who proceeded at once to the White Hart, and saw Charles.

"I say, Charley, my boy," said he, "where can we go? I want to ask you a couple of questions."

"Oh, in here," replied Charles. "There's nobody here."

"That'll do then," said Todd; "come along. I say, Charley," he added, having entered the room, "you've got a Colonel Cartwright here, haven't you?"

"Yes."

"Ah! Who is he—do you know?"

"I only know that his name's Cartwright; and that he's a colonel."

"A gentlemanly man?"

"Yes, and one of the right sort too. There's no mistake about him. He's been here now nearly a month."

"Oh! indeed. What's he after here? do you know?"

"Why, I don't exactly *know*; but I should say, that he's either looking after a house, or paying his addresses to a lady."

"Oh! that's it. I see. He's got a horse here, hasn't he?"

"Some gentleman's servant brought him one this morning."

"A grey horse?"

"Yes. Then you know something about him?"

"Why, the fact is, my son Tom was with him this morning; and, of course, you know, I wanted to know who he was."

"But that wasn't your son that had lunch with him, was it?"

"Yes, that was him, Charley."

"It was! Why, what a slap fellow he is!"

"I believe you, my boy. He *is* a slap fellow! There's no mistake at all about *him*. But, I say, you've no occasion to take any notice, you know, about my comin' here."

"*Not* a bit of it."

"Because, you know, I don't want him to hear I've been making inquiries: *you* understand."

"*I'm* awake."

"Well, but, I say, when are you coming in to have a glass o' wine with me?"

"Oh, I'll drop in one of these odd days."

"Will you come to-night? Say you will."

"What time?"

"Oh, say eight or nine, which you like."

"I can't come *before* nine."

"Will you come then?"

"I will."

"That's a bargain. I shall expect you. Recollect, Charley, mum's the word."

Charley winked with great significance; and Todd left the house in the perfect conviction that the colonel was in reality what Tom had represented him to be, "and no mistake."

"All right, Tommy," said he, on his return. "It's all right, my boy, at least, as far as it goes. Charley gave him an out-and-out character; and thinks he's either lookin' out for a house here, or courtin'."

"Then I know which it is!" cried Tom: "he's a-courtin'; I'll tell you why. When I gave him the health of *Mrs.* Colonel Cartwright, he smiled, and said there wasn't one yet. That's about it."

"No doubt."

"That's it, I'll bet a million! Because, when I gave him the health of her which *is* to be, he drank it as if he meant to swallow the glass."

"Well, now then, Tommy, all this here looks well: I haven't no doubt about it, mind you; but the next move is to show George that there note."

"Then we'll start at once, shall we? Have you dined?"

"Yes; I've had *my* dinner; but that's no odds. Polly!—Tell Joe to saddle the mare, my lass."

"How strange things turn up," observed Tom.

"They do, Tommy; they do; and I like the look o' this: I now think it'll turn up trumps."

"I'm sure of it! As the colonel *said*,—what does he want to be ashamed of me for? and if he is, what's the good of his holding out now? You should just hear him talk, that's all! When you do, I'll forfeit my life, if you don't come exact to the same point as me, that when the general finds that he's friendly with us, he'll come round."

"I wish he may, Tommy: not that *I* care much about him, but because it would make George more happy in her mind."

"That's all *I* care about," cried Tom; "him and me I know should *never* set our horses' heads together. It's only for her sake I care a single button about him."

"That's true, Tommy: that's true. But I say, my boy, have you been settin' here without anything to take? What'll you have? Here, Polly!—What'll you have?"

"Have you got a bottle of sherry open?"

"Yes, of course. And if I hadn't, what's the odds? But I have, and one of the right sort too—Georgianny's!"

"Send I may live!" cried Tom; "how the colonel *did* like that sherry, to be sure!"

"Did you give him some of *that*?"

"Yes; oh, you should have seen him! He smacked his lips, and

snapped his eyes, and shook his head, and *squinted* at it! He's an out-and-outer, that fellow is, and no mistake."

"He hasn't tasted such a glass of wine lately, *I* know."

"He swore—that is to say, he didn't swear, but he declared he never tasted such a glass of wine before in all his life!"

"I don't believe he ever did. I'd back it against all England."

"I like it better and better every time I drink it," said Tom, as Polly placed the bottle before him; "here's wishing that this dodge may answer."

"Amen," cried Todd. "I'll drink that, Tommy. The aforesaid. And now let's be off. Polly, tell Joe to look alive, there's a good lass!"

"The horses are waiting," said Polly.

"Very good. Now, we'll just drink the colonel's good health, and then start."

The colonel's health was drunk, and they started; and on the road, Tom explained minutely all that had passed between him and the colonel at the Box. They were not, however, long on the road; for while Tom was anxious to explain to Georgiana that her favourite horse so well remembered him, his father panted to ascertain whether the general did or did not write that note.

On their arrival, Georgiana, as usual, flew to the door, and shook hands with Todd, and took his arm, and then walked with him into the parlour.

"I scarcely expected," she observed, "to have the pleasure of your company at dinner to-day."

"I *have* dined, my dear," replied Todd, "but I've something I want you to look at. Now, Tommy, where's the note?"

Tom felt in his waistcoat pockets, and couldn't find it. He then felt in his trousers pockets, and then in his coat pockets, and then in all his pockets at once; but no!

"Why you surely haven't lost it!" cried Todd.

"Not a bit of it. That's not lost!" replied Tom, as with a peculiarly thoughtful expression he ransacked the whole of his pockets again. "It must be somewhere! Stop a bit: hold hard: perhaps it's in my hat," he added, rushing from the room, but he found it not there!

"Tut, bless my life and soul!" cried Todd.

"Hold hard," said Tom, who kept searching with unexampled energy. "Now, don't fly off into a passion! It's somewhere, I know! It must be somewhere! But *where*," he added, "I know no more—no more than a baby unborn!"

"Why, I wouldn't have lost it for a fifty-pun note!" cried Todd.

"Nor would I. But ain't *you* got it?"

"I have it! How should I have it? It couldn't hop out o' your pocket into mine, could it?"

"Don't suppose it could!"

"Why, what's this?" said Todd, as he drew forth the note.

"There you are!" cried Tom. "There you are. *Now*, who's lost it?"

"But how came it there? I didn't put it in!"

"If you didn't I didn't! Perhaps it put itself in."

"And yet I s'pose I did, too."

"I shouldn't be surprised."

"Well, so long as it isn't lost I don't care. But, Lor' bless me, though, what a turn it gave me. Well!" he added, turning to Georgiana, "now, my dear, I want you to tell me if you know whose handwriting this is?"

"Papa's!" cried Georgiana, as she glanced at the superscription.

"But look inside, dear—look inside."

Georgiana at once opened it.

"Now, what do you think?"

"Oh! 'tis his; yes, 'tis his."

"Are you quite sure?"

"Quite. Here is his name," she added, kissing it. "Here is his name. But what is all this about?"

"We'll explain all that presently. All we want to know is, whether you are sure that that's the general's handwriting?"

"I am certain that it is—quite certain. There cannot be a doubt upon the subject. Besides, here's his seal!"

"I didn't look at that," said Tom, "I quite forgot that. Why, to be sure," he added, having inspected it. "There you are! Of course! My buttons used to have the same animal on 'em—a cross 'twixt a Muscovy duck and a griffin."

"Tom, dear," cried Georgiana, smiling.

"Well, as true as I'm alive it's a fact, you know. You can't make anything else of it, *can* you? I never see such a rum head in *my* life; it beats nature all into fits. I should like to see the mother of that varment much. I'd have her stuffed, and—"

"Tom, dear, don't go on so."

"Oh! I wouldn't mind going to a little expense about her."

"Come, Tommy, come," said Todd, "shut up, and let's attend a little to business."

"But, surely," said Georgiana, "the horse you told me you were going to look at is not one of papa's horses?"

"Dony!" replied Tom—"your old favourite, Dony!"

"Is it possible?"

"Yes!—and when I asked him if he'd like to come and live with me and carry his missis again, he laughed and nodded, and made his eyes sparkle, and almost said, 'Send I may live if I shouldn't.'"

"Pretty creature! But has papa sold it to that gentleman?"

"No; he wants to sell it. That gentleman, Colonel Cartwright, 's his friend."

"I do not remember the name."

"Oh, but he *is* his friend; safe! Look here!—'Dear Cartwright!' And what's more, he knows *you*!—he knew you in India, and knew Colonel Storr, and Miss Storr, and the whole boiling."

"Indeed! I wish that I had recollected him when he called. I certainly should not have left the room as I did."

"Oh, *you'll* have a lot of opportunities of making all that right. I'll get him to come, if you like, and dine with us to-morrow."

"I should indeed be most happy to receive him. But *will* he come?"

"Will he! I'll bet a million of it! Why, George, he's one of the most out-and-out gentlemanly fellows I ever met with. *He'll* come, safe enough. But first now, how about Dony? Eh? *Wouldn't* you like to have him?"

"Why, dear, we do not *want* him now."

"But wouldn't you like to have him?"

"I certainly should! But, then, I couldn't think of exchanging Tartar for him."

"That's not the pint, my dear," observed Todd. "I know you wouldn't like to part with Tartar, because he was my first present! But that's not the pint. The pint is, shall we make friends with this Colonel Cartwright, which bears a capital character at the inn where he's stoppin', and may persuade the general to come round. If you think we ought to scrape acquaintance with him, why we can't, I think, do better than buy the horse, and pay him for it when he comes over to take a bit of dinner with us—"

"That'll be about it!" cried Tom. "That's the dodge: for although he'd be safe to come over without that, still, we should then make double sure of him; and once get him here to have a bit of dinner with us, and hear George talk, and play, and sing, he'd be sure to come constant, and then, you know, he'd bring the general round as nice as ninepence."

"It all depends, my dear," returned Todd, "on whether you think we ought to make his acquaintance."

"Oh, I should like to see and converse with him much!" cried Georgiana; "as it appears he knew me in India, his society would be delightful. It is true I do not remember him: but that is not extraordinary: I was young, very young, at that time."

"That's exactly what he said!" cried Tom; "'She doesn't remember me,' says he, 'she was very young then—hardly older,' says he, 'than another little girl I used to know there—I mean little Julia Storr.'"

"Then I should be indeed delighted to see him."

"Very good," said Todd; "then that pint's settled. I like the look of it: I must say I do like the look of it, because I believe it'll

turn up trumps; and as to the horse, why that can't make much difference, you know, either way: but is it a tidy 'un, Tommy?"

"An out-and-outer!" cried Tom.

"It is indeed a beautiful creature," observed Georgiana; "so quiet, so docile, and so sagacious. If I had it now, I know what I should do with it!"

"What, my dear?" inquired Todd. "What would you like to do with it?"

"I should like," replied Georgiana, "to make *you* a present of it. Oh! it would suit you exactly; it is such a *dear* to canter!"

"Rayther too spicy for me, I doubt."

"Not a bit of it!" cried Tom. "No, not a ha'porth! it'll be the very thing! I never thought of that before: it'll suit you to a hair; and then, send I may live, I say, won't you look populor?"

"But what's to become o' the old mare?" cried Todd; "I don't like to part with her."

"Part with her!—no. Let her retire from business, like her master. You can now and then treat her to a trot, you know, if you like, just to put her in mind of her former pleasures; but let her retire to a respectable piece of pasture, with a stable attached to it, so that she'll be able to go in and out as she likes."

"Well, I don't think I should feel quite at home, you know, mounted on such a spicy horse as that. However, we shall see."

"But how extraordinary," observed Georgiana, "that this gentleman—being a friend of my father—should call upon you—"

"That's about the rummest part of the business!" cried Tom. "But you'll see how it was, by-and-by. I'll tell you all about it from beginning to end. But, I say, isn't dinner ready?"

"Yes, dear."

"Then, let's have it."

Georgiana rang the bell, and they almost immediately sat down to dinner; and when Tom had explained to her all that had occurred, it was decided that he should keep his appointment with Maitland; and, having purchased the horse, invite him to dine with them on the morrow.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### TOM'S VISIT TO JACKSON'S.

At the time appointed—half-past six—Tom returned to the White Hart; and having ascertained that Maitland had dined, was conducted at once to his room.

"Punctual as the sun!" he exclaimed, as Tom entered. "You

are not only a gentleman, I find, but a man of business—a combination rarely discoverable.”

“Scarce, rather, eh?” said Tom. “Not too many moving?”

“Scarce! There is hardly one man in a million of whom it can be said that he possesses the characteristics of both.”

“I believe you! But what’s the good of not being both? That’s what *I* want to know! What’s the good of it? Them which is both shall be more popular anyhow than them, you know, which ain’t!”

“Why, of course! You are *quite* right. What wine will you take?”

“Oh, I’ll do as you do! I always like port after dinner. Here’s to your jovial good health!” he added. “And now about the grey—”

“Understand,” interrupted Maitland; “I should be extremely sorry to induce you to purchase the horse if you don’t want him.”

“Oh, but I should like to have him!—and what’s more, my little wife would like to have him, too!—so that’s cooked. Send him over just when you like; but I shan’t give you a cheque till you come and dine with us.”

“You are very polite.”

“Well, then, when’ll you come? How are you fixed for to-morrow?”

“I have no *particular* engagement!”

“Then come and dine with us.”

“I shall be most happy.”

“No ceremony, you know! Pot luck! Will five suit you?”

“Five is my usual hour.”

“Then we’ll say five. I told George—that’s my little wife—all about you; and she’ll be *so* glad to have a little dust o’ chat about old times and things, you know, in India.”

“And I shall, indeed, be delighted to have a little conversation with her.”

“I’m sure of it: I know it: for *in* conversation you’ll find her a regular stunner.”

“I have not the slightest doubt that I shall find her a most perfect lady.”

“And no mistake!” cried Tom. “She’s a blazer—what I call a blazer—I say!” he added, as Captain Crock passed on the opposite side of the street. “Do you know that there swell there?”

“What, him?” returned Maitland, colouring deeply. “That tall fellow in the pigeon-breasted coat? I have seen him before? Who is he?”

“He’s an article, he is: what *I* call an article! That’s the swell which calls himself ‘Captain Crock’—about as much of a captain as my grandmother was he’s a bonnet.”

“A bonnet?”

"A picker up, you know."

"A picker up?"

"Ay, a thief, you know, which goes about picking up people, and taking 'em to the gambling-houses to be robbed."

"Is it possible?" cried Maitland, turning as pale as death.

"I see you're not up to the dodges of these varment. That fellow would take your eye-teeth out, and look at you full in the face. If you come across any of 'em, cut 'em dead: if they hang about you, kick 'em: that's the only way to serve 'em. They're ten times worse than highway robbers. I'd forgive a man which stopped me on the road; but as to them plundering scamps, they ought to be hanged. That fellow was after me once; but he soon found that that was no go. I wasn't so green as all that comes to, neither! I've made up my mind firm, that whatever else I may do, I'll never set foot in a gambling-house."

"You are quite right," said Maitland, who clearly perceived the expediency of altering his plans; "you are perfectly right."

"I know it," cried Tom; "and no flesh shall ever tempt me."

"I applaud your resolution; for although some may win, many, I have no doubt, lose fortunes."

"It wouldn't be so bad if the thieves played fair," observed Tom; "but when they come to cheating, you know, it's a downright dead robbery. The varment 'll let you win at first, just to draw you: oh yes, they'll let you win at first; but he which thinks he stands half a chance afterwards, can't be quite right in his head."

"It would be a good plan," suggested Maitland, "to go in some evening and win a good sum; and then, having won all they'd allow you to win, cease to play."

"It would serve 'em just right," returned Tom, "that's certain; but I'd never darken their doors. I never did, and I never will."

"You are quite right, quite right," said Maitland. "It's best not to do so."

"There's no knowing what it might lead to!" cried Tom. "That's the way to look at it. There's no knowing what it might lead to! If a man becomes a gambler, you know, it's all up with him: he's never worth a button after that. Look at that wretch now, that Captain Crock, which just passed us! What is he? He dresses popular and spicy, of course; but what is he? A blackleg, a swindler, a varment, and a thief. If he's got a wife, what must she think of him? Ain't he a glaring disgrace to his sex? What does *he* care about who's robbed and ruined, so long as he pockets a share of the spoil? Why, rather than be such a wretch as that, I'd go out and gather the muck off the roads. He'd have got hold of me if I hadn't been awake, and what for? To skin me: to plunder me of every blessed pound I had in the world. The varment! And suppose he'd succeeded: suppose he'd brought me and my poor George



to beggary; I should ha' gone raving mad; she'd ha' died with a broken heart; and what would he have cared? Nothing! Ought such a wretch as that to be suffered to crawl upon the face of the blessed earth? Is such a varment fit to live?"

"He must be a villain," returned Maitland, whom Tom's homely eloquence had touched. "He must be."

"A villain! There, if he was going to be hanged to-morrow morning, and I could, by holding up my finger, save him,—I don't mean to say I mightn't do it: I won't say I mightn't: I might; but if I did, it would be to send him clean out of nature among the Hot-tentots of the wilderness; where they've neither got a penny in their pocket, nor a pocket to put a penny in. That would cure him. He might try to pick them swells up if he liked: if he picked up the lot, the odds wouldn't be much; but as to his living in civilised nature, among men which have tin to lose, he shouldn't do it! I only just wish I had the management of him. I'd serve out the rascal, and not only him: I'd serve out the whole boiling of 'em!—transport 'em' all!—for they're all thieves alike; they all live by picking pockets; they'll all of them plunder you, and look you in the face. So you be on your guard, that's all!"

"I will be."

"If they come up and smirk, and want to get into chat with you, look at 'em fierce! That's enough. You'll see with half an eye what they are, because no real gentleman, you know, scrapes acquaintance in that way."

"Of course not," said Maitland; "you are perfectly right. I feel obliged to you for giving me this caution. But come, pass the wine. Will you have a cigar?"

"With all my heart!" replied Tom. "I should like one."

Cigars were accordingly ordered; and as Maitland dexterously prompted Tom to relate every circumstance of importance that had occurred to him since his marriage, he rattled away until half-past nine, when he left, and returned to his father.

"Well, Tommy, my boy!" cried Todd, as Tom entered. "Will the colonel dine with us?"

"Of course," replied Tom; "like an out-and-out trump as he is. He'll send the grey over in the morning, and be there himself at five."

"Will you take this seat, sir?" said the waiter at the White Hart, who had kept his engagement with Todd.

"Not a bit of it, Charley," replied Tom. "No, don't move for me: I'll sit here. When we meet in this manner, we meet as friends: all equal, you know, and no nonsense. Tip us the bottle, Charley. Now then, governor, where do you keep your cigars?"

"There they are, my boy, just behind you."

"Will you have one of mine, sir?" inquired Charles.

"Yes," replied Tom, "with all my heart. Is there anything particularly popular about 'em?"

"I'll back 'em against the field!"

"You will? Where did you buy 'em?"

"I bought 'em of a commercial gent, and I've got about half a box left. If you like 'em, sir—and I'm sure you will—I shall be happy to make you a present of the lot."

"You don't mean that?"

"I shall feel most proud."

"Then you're a trump: but I won't take 'em from you. Tell me where I can buy a few boxes like 'em—the same sort, you know—and I'll say something to you. But I say, Charley, my friend, the colonel's a good sort, eh?"

"He's an out-and-outer, sir. There's no mistake about him."

"He speaks very highly of you."

"Well, I don't know, sir: of course, I always *try* to give good satisfaction. But he's a gentleman, and no mistake. If he wanted to borrow a fifty-pun note, he should have it, with all the pleasure in life."

"And be safe, too."

"Of course, sir! But I'm only saying if he *did*, he should have it."

"Exactly. Oh! I understand. But, I say, is there nothing going on in the town here? You all seem to be most unpopulorly dull."

"We are dull," replied Charles; "precious dull."

"But don't you have any social meetings, now, of a night?"

"Oh, there's always a capital party up at Jackson's: they always have life enough there."

"I should like to go in some night," observed Tom, as Polly called Todd from the bar. "What do you say; will you go up there with us?"

"I should feel most proud, sir; but when?"

"Oh, what do you say to going up now, just for change?"

"But how are we to manage it? You don't want the governor to know, I suppose?"

"Not a bit of it."

"Well, then, I'll tell you what do: you leave as soon as you like, and stop there; and send one of the men down to say I'm wanted. I can't well leave just yet, without being sent for."

"But won't the governor smell a rat, think you? Not that I care a bit about it; only perhaps, you know, it'll be as well."

"I understand. If you send a man down, and tell him to send word in I'm wanted—merely that I'm wanted—that'll be all right enough."

"Now, Tommy," cried Todd, on re-entering the bar; "time's

gettin' on, Tommy. It's near ten, you know, my boy: think of Georgianny!"

"All right," returned Tom. "You can tell Joe, if you like, to bring the horse round."

"Joe!" shouted Todd, highly pleased with Tom's promptitude, which, in such cases, was certainly unusual. "Now, then; the horse! Look alive! I say, Tommy," he added, "let's have a *tidy* feed, you know, to-morrow."

"George, of course, 'll see about that. Them's things, you know, I never interfere with."

"No, I know, Tommy; but, you know, as it's the *first* time—"

"That'll be all right; leave that to her: and now then, governor, give us a toast."

"Well," said Todd, as he re-filled his glass; "I'll give you the health of Georgianny: God bless her!"

"That's my little wife," said Tom, turning to Charles. "She's a good sort, she is, and no mistake."

"She *is* a good sort," added Todd; "an out-and-out sort! I'll back her against all flesh. Do you know her, Charley?"

"No; I can't say that I do."

"You should see her, that's all! She's a regular angel! My little girl, which went off in a decline, and which is now happy in heaven, would ha' been the very image of her. Here's her good health!"

"I'll drink it," said Charles, "with all my heart! And now," he added, having emptied his glass, "I'll give you the health of Mr. Thomas."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Todd. "Tommy, good health to you!"

"Thank you," said Tom. "And now, Charley, my boy, I'll give you the governor's good health. He's a rum 'un, but a good 'un."

"All right," cried Todd; "and when you've drunk that health, I'll give you another. I'll give you the health of a trump, and that's Charley."

"Gentlemen," said Charles, as he rose, and trembled violently—"Gentlemen, I rise on this occasion to return you my most grateful thanks for the honour you've done me in drinking my health. I'm an humble individual, and a man of few words, and so I can't express the feelings I feel as I wish; but to be in such company as I'm in now, it's about the proudest moment of my life. Gentlemen, it has been said that—gentlemen, I have heard it uttered—I have heard it, gentlemen, and it's an old saying and a true one—I'm a man of few words.—Gentlemen, I haven't the scholarship of some men, and so you must take the will for the deed, and I'll drink, in return, all your very good healths."

"Bravo!" cried Tom, "bravo! Send I may live, you ought to be one of our members of Parliament."

"Can't come it," said Charles. "Safe to stick in the mud."

"Not a bit of it! You do it capital."

"The horse is at the door, sir," said Polly.

"All right. Well, ta-ta, governor; good-bye, Charley."

"Give my love to Georgiana," said Todd.

"Safe!" cried Tom, and immediately left them.

"Well," said Todd; "what do you think of him now?"

"What do I think of him, sir?" returned Charles, "He's just the very sort of trump I like. No nonsense *about* him, you know!—right up and down straight, open-hearted and free!—*that's* the sort of swell for my money."

"He certainly is an out-and-outer, though I say it. But come, Charley, come,—help yourself."

"All right, sir. I can't be doing better than I am. A capital glass of wine this, and no mistake. But I say, Mr. Todd," he added; "if it's a fair question, are you going to retire from business?"

"Yes, Charley, yes; I've had pretty well enough of it. I'm going to cut it as soon as Polly and young Meadows splice."

"Oh, indeed! Then are you going to give the house up to them?"

"Yes; Polly's been a good girl, and Sam's a steady fellow; so I thought as I didn't want to slave any longer, I couldn't do better than give the business up to 'em, and let 'em have a fair start."

"Well, that's very kind of you."

"Why, you see—"

"You are wanted, sir, please," said Polly, who, at this moment, opened the door.

"Who? I?" inquired Charles.

"Yes, a man came to say you were wanted, and went off again like a shot."

"But I say, Charley, must you go directly?" cried Todd. "Won't by-and-by do."

"I doubt not."

"Well; but I'm sorry you're going so soon. It's quite right; business, of course, must be attended to. But when'll you look in again?"

"Oh, I'll run in in a night or two."

"You must be quick about it, you know. I shall be off in a week or ten days."

"So soon as that! Well, then, I'll tell you what I'll do. To-morrow night, I know you'll be engaged—I'll drop in the night after."

"Do, Charley, do. Good night."

"Good night."

Charles then left the house and went to Jackson's, where he found Tom waiting for him in the bar, surrounded by several singu-

larly-dressed individuals, who were anxious to ascertain who and what he was.

"Well, old boy," he cried, as Charles entered, "how did you manage to get away?"

"All right, sir," replied Charles. "No more suspicion than if he'd seen me going up to bed."

"Well, what shall we have?—A bottle of port?"

"I'll leave it to you, sir; whatever you like."

"Well, you've been drinking port, and so have I; let's have it."

"Shall we have it here or in the other room? We shall hear a song or two, if we go in there."

"Then, let's go. Tell 'em to send the wine in."

Charles did so, and then led him into a room, in which there was a party of about forty, composed of training grooms, jockeys, and touters.

"An artful lot here," said Tom, privately, to Charles.

"Artful, sir!—I believe you. They're all art. Look at 'em—that'll tell you at once what they are. Down to every move on the board. Look at that lot there a-top; one's afraid to open his mouth, lest the others should jump down his throat. Do you see that swell there to the left? That's a tout. See how anxious he is to catch every word that's said by the grooms and the jockeys around him."

"But how do them fellows live? That puzzles me. They're always lounging about the place; they always seem to have nothing to do, and yet they've always got plenty of tin. How do they make it?"

"I'll tell you. Take that fellow there as a sample. He's been sent down here from Manchester, where there's more betting going on, perhaps, than in any other town out of London. Well, he's sent down here to look after the horses, and pick up all the information he can. If a horse turns up lame, he sends word directly to those who employ him, and who set to work at once, and bet against that horse."

"I see; before the thing becomes generally known."

"Exactly."

"And how do they pay him?"

"Oh, they give him, perhaps, two or three pound a-week certain; but if he should happen to make a *hit*, why they'll give him a hundred or two as a present."

"Indeed!—So much as that?"

"I've known 'em give a man like that five hundred pound for a piece of information. And it's answered their purpose, too, because, perhaps, they've made five, or even ten thousand by it. For instance: we'll say there's a race coming off in a day or two. Well, the parties in London or Manchester—no matter where—say Manchester—

stand to win ten thousand pound on the first favourite. Well, the tout ascertains when the horse 'll be tried, and he goes and sees him tried, and if he finds he breaks down, you know, or can't go the pace, or live the distance—away he cuts—stands for no repairs—up he goes to London, and then down to Manchester, and tells the parties of it, who make no more to do but set to work, you know, and lay the odds to any amount: and not only hedge off all their money but stand to win, perhaps, twenty or thirty thousand on a downright dead certainty, before the fact of the horse having broken down becomes known to any but these parties beyond the stable."

"And these parties are sure to win?"

"Safe!—they can't help it; they can't be off winning."

"If the horse turns up dead lame, the bets stand?"

"Of course! And it's then that the tout makes his market: it's then that he pockets the tin; for a man don't mind giving, say five hundred pound for a piece of information, if he makes ten or twelve thousand by it."

"But I thought that the horses were always tried in private."

"So they are!"

"Then, how can these touters see 'em tried?"

"I'll tell you how they do it. They're always on the look out, of course. Very well. Say a race is coming off in a couple of days. Well, to-night, you know, down comes Lord So-and-so, the owner of the first favourite. Well, he don't want it to be known that he's here; but directly he comes down the tout gets hold of the information *somehow*—there's many ways of doing it—sometimes a five-pound note'll go a good way. Well, he hears that Lord So-and-so's down, and he knows what he's come for: he knows he's come down to try his horse. Well, before it's light in the morning he goes and takes his glass—through which he can even see whether the jockey's got spurs on or not a couple of miles off, and plants himself, sometimes in a ditch, and sometimes in a tree, a mile or two, you know, from the trying course, and there waits secure till the horse comes out, and then sees him tried unobserved. If anything's wrong, as I said before, away he cuts across the country, and if all's right, or better than he thought for, he writes off at once to let 'em know. I've known these touts to get the rheumatiz through waiting about in a field all night; I've known 'em even to catch their death! for, if they can learn, within a little, when a horse is to be tried, *they* don't stick at trifles—they will, if it's possible, see the trial somehow."

"Well, in case of any accident," said Tom, "it's a safe game for those who employ 'em, at all events!"

"Safe! I believe you. It is a safe game. And that's how money's made."

At this moment silence was commanded for a song, to which Tom and Charles, with the rest, sat and listened; after which, a toast was

given, and then another song; and when Tom perceived that the bottle was nearly empty, he and Charles left the room and returned to the bar, in which several persons were playing at loo, which at that particular period, and in that particular part of the country, was termed "Knock."

"Charley; you'll join us?" said one of the party.

"Not to-night," replied Charles.

"Oh! have a knock in for an hour! Perhaps your friend will join us too?"

"What are you playing?"

"Only eighteen-penny! quite harmless."

"Do you feel inclined to have a knock in for an hour?" said Charles, addressing Tom.

"I don't understand much of the game."

"Oh, it's simple enough. The first round'll show you all about it."

"Well! I don't mind sitting down for an hour."

They accordingly joined the party at once, and Tom held most extraordinary hands. Sometimes he held the ace, king, and queen, and sometimes the king, queen, and knave. He was seldom, indeed, without *two* good trumps, and therefore almost invariably loo'd those who stood. There never was a game more completely in favour of one man: for let the cards be shuffled how they might, he was certain to "knock in," and win.

At length, when he had won between fifty and sixty pounds, the losing parties became angry, and began to insinuate that this was ascribable to no "run of luck," but to some sleight of hand, but this was no sooner intimated broadly, than Tom rose, and throwing up his cards, said, "I'll tell you what it is; you are strangers to me, but I'll tell you what it is; if any man dares to tell me to my teeth that I cheat or play unfairly, or come any hanky-panky dodge, I'll knock him down. I've had a run of luck, it is true; but I've taken the cards as they were dealt; I haven't even touched 'em till it came to my turn; but now,—although I could again, with these cards, sweep the board—since it's come to this, I'll play no more."

"Oh, let's go on now!" cried one.

"Not to your knowledge. You won't catch me touching another card to-night. I don't play for the purpose of winning money. As far as that's concerned, I don't care a button about whether I win or lose! It makes no odds to me. To prove to you it don't, let me tell you that my name's Todd, and I don't care who knows it."

"What, the Squire?" inquired one of the party of Charles.

"Yes," replied Charles. "*He'd* do nothing wrong."

"I'm sure of it! we are all of us sure of it. Come, sir, play again, sir! never mind a joke."

"A joke, I like a joke as well as any mortal flesh; but this wasn't meant as a joke. More the t'other. But whether it was or not, my

word's my bond; I'll stand half a dozen of champagne if you like, but I'll not touch another card to-night, if I know it."

"Half a dozen, sir?" inquired the landlord. "Nobody believes that you'd play unfair; besides, at this game, you couldn't do it. Shall I bring it in now, sir?"

"Yes," replied Tom, who withdrew to a side table with Charles, as the party went on with the game. "Half-past two!" he added, looking at his watch. "I say, Charles, what's the time by you?"

"I want about five-and-twenty minutes to three."

"Tut! I'd no thought of its being so late. I say, Charley, you know the go of the house; just tell 'em to bring round my horse, will you? there's a good fellow."

Charles, on the instant, did so; and the landlord brought in the champagne; and when Tom had paid for it, and drank a couple of glasses, he said, "Good night!" left the house, sprang into the saddle, and hastily galloped off home.

Georgiana, who had been for some hours in a state of anxiety the most intense—filled with a thousand apprehensions, and conceiving a thousand accidents—no sooner heard him dash up to the gate, than she fervently exclaimed, "Thank Heaven, he is safe!" and, having rang the bell, rushed out to meet him.

"Dear Tom," she cried; "oh, I'm so happy! so happy!" she added, bursting into tears.

"I know it's wrong," said Tom; "I know it's too bad; but don't scold me."

"Scold you, my love!"

"I'd no notion at all of its being so late."

"I do not care about that, dear! now I know that you're safe, I'm content."

"Safe!" cried Tom. "I'm as right as a trivet. But don't cry; if you do, I shall think you're very angry."

"I'm not angry; indeed I am not: I'm only overjoyed at your return. You met with no accident, Tom, dear?"

"Accident! not a bit of it! except, indeed, the accident of being kept out late."

"Then I'm happy."

"Do you forgive me then, at once, without any blowing up?"

Georgiana kissed him passionately; and he called her an "out and-out trump;" and when she had made him eat the breast of a chicken, and he had made her take a glass of mulled wine, he told her that he knew she was "nothing but a good 'un," embraced her fondly, and sent her up to bed.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

## TODD'S LECTURE.

EARLY the following morning the general rode over to Newmarket, and, on his arrival, sent a note—which he had previously written, to Maitland—down to the White Hart. Maitland was then at breakfast; but having opened the note—in which the general had merely said that he should be happy to see him—he finished with all convenient speed, and went up to the Rutland Arms.

"Well, Maitland," cried the general, extending his hand; "any news? Have you seen him?"

"Oh, yes," replied Maitland; "he has purchased the horse. Independently of which, I'm to have the *honour* of dining with him to-day, at five."

"Bravo! bravo! Then he's safe."

"Why, he'll require some management. He is not to be caught in the usual way. Although vulgar in the extreme, and as vain as a peacock, he is not exactly a fool. In the first place, he has made up his mind never to enter a gaming-house."

"Made up his mind!" said the general, with a sneer. "But, of course, you'll soon cause him to change his mind, such a *mind* as it is?"

"Why, on that particular point, he must be nursed. I ascertained that last evening. But *I'll* very soon get him into the ring: if not in that way, in some other. *I've* conceived a scheme by which I feel quite sure I shall be able to work him. But, of course, this is not to be done all at once. He is passionately fond of horses, I find. He fancies that he knows as much about a horse as any man in England."

"And certainly, as far as that is concerned, I do not believe that there are many men in England who know much more. He's an excellent judge of a horse."

"He may be; but let me get him into the betting-ring, and all his judgment will go for nothing. There are ways of working the oracle. 'The race is not always to the swift.' Sometimes a man's judgment operates against him by prompting him to depend upon that alone. The best judge of a horse is more easily worked sometimes than a man who knows nothing about one. *He's* to be managed; but, as I said before, it is not to be done all at once."

"But have you, or have you not, made up your mind to *stick* to him?"

"I have."

"Then I'm satisfied. He knew the horse, of course?"

"In a moment: and the horse knew him. I sent it over this morning. He has not paid me for it. He told me that he would *not* give me a cheque until I went over to dine with him. When I receive it, I'll forward it to you."

"No, don't do that; keep it. I'll make you a present, not of the cheque, but of the horse."

"No, no; I shall send the cheque over to you."

"This affair, you say, will take some time; therefore, keep the cheque; you may want it: at all events, keep it until you know whether you are likely to want it or not."

"Very well; that'll do: I shall know more about him to-night, of course; but I'm an immense favourite, I find, already."

"That's the wretch's father," cried the general, as Todd, with an expression of anger, rode past on his old mare.

"Is *that* the man?"

"That's the father of my *son-in-law*! the old scoundrel! I should glory in seeing them all come to the dogs. However, now I know the immediate result of your first interview with that *respectable* individual's cub, perhaps you will give me a few of the details?"

"Oh, I'll explain them with pleasure," cried Maitland, who proceeded at once to relate all that had occurred, in a style well calculated to strengthen the general's feelings of contempt.

While Maitland was thus amusing the general, and playing his own peculiar game, Todd arrived at the Box, and, having dismounted, took Georgiana's hand; and while gazing at her, tears sprang into his eyes, and he said, "*I'll* talk to him! I won't *have* it! Where is he? I'll make him ashamed of himself. It's disgraceful."

"What may you mean?" inquired Georgiana, anxiously.

"I mean, my dear, it mustn't be, and shan't be. I won't have you served so. Where is he?"

"Well, governor," cried Tom, as he entered the room.

"Here, I want to speak to you, sir, in private."

"In private," cried Tom; "why, what's up now?"

"What's up, sir! It is what's up!"

"For Heaven's sake," said Georgiana, "what is the matter?"

"I know all about it. Flesh can't deceive me. You haven't had your natteral rest! I know it."

"Oh, that's of no importance; indeed it is not."

"I know better, my dear! It's a growin' evil. The notion of such an unnatteral hour,—the notion of three o'clock! I say the notion. Here, I want to talk to you, sir, in the garden."

"Don't scold him," said Georgiana. "Don't scold him this time; he never kept out late before, and I'm sure it was *quite* by accident."

"Not a bit of it, my dear; not a bit of it! Here," he added, on leaving the room, "I've got something to say to you particular."

Tom winked at Georgiana, and followed.

"Now, Tommy," said Todd, on reaching the garden.

"Well," said Tom, "what have you got to say? You know I was out rather late last night; who—"

"*Rather* late! Send I may live, three o'clock, *rather* late."

"Well, *very* late, then. But who told you?"

"Never you mind who told me, Tommy; don't you at all fret yourself about that. I *was* told, and what's more, I know where you was; and more than all, I know, Tommy, what you was up to; now hold hard a bit, just look here: in the first place, haven't I over and over again heard you say that you'd made up your mind not to gamble?"

"I've said that I'd never set foot in a gambling-house!"

"A gamblin'-house? Why what do you mean? What's a gamblin'-house but a house where there's gamblin'? Isn't every house a gamblin'-house, pray, where there's gamblin' goin' for'ard?"

"Not a bit of it. A gambling-house is a house express for gambling, and nothing but gambling. That's what I call a gambling-house."

"So do I! But they're not the only gamblin'-houses goin'; I ain't lived all these years without knowin' that. I call Jackson's a gamblin'-house. There's gambling goin' for'ard there every night, and that, too, among a set o' blacklegs and touters."

"Well, but I wasn't what I call gambling last night."

"Not gamblin'? You was playing at Knock. Don't you call that a gamblin' game? You won fifty or sixty pound. Don't you call that gamblin'? It won't do, Tommy: I know I'm right! One thing, Tommy, leads on to another; and now hold hard again. Just you look here. You ought to be a gentleman. Very well. Now then, a gentleman, you know, Tommy, which is a gentleman, ain't got no sly ways about him."

"You don't mean to say I've got any sly ways, do you?"

"Just you shut up for one moment, and don't fly off into a passion; I don't want to vex your sentiments. What I say, Tommy, I say for your own good, and when I say that you *was* sly last night, I want you to take it in the right pint o' view. Now, look here, when you left me with Charley, you made me believe you was going straight home, when you *knew* you was going to Jackson's! That's what I call sly."

"How do you know that I knew it?"

"Tommy, no *flesh* can get over me; I know it was all arranged between you; I know it was fixed that you should send for Charley. I know it; and as such, Tommy, I shall never respect that there young man again."

"It wasn't *his* fault; besides, I'm not exactly a kid! and you *don't* mean to think that when I want to go anywhere just for an hour or so, I'm to come and ask you?"

"No, Tommy, no; I want nothin' o' that. You are now your own master. You can go where you like. I don't mean to say you'd no right to go to Jackson's last night for all me; but I *do* mean to say, that the way you did go was a sly way. I want to see you act like a gentleman, Tommy. I want to see you open and straightfor'ard. Not that I care, as far as I am concerned, about your leavin' me as you did last night—not a button! But, depend upon it, Tommy, such company as you meet there 'll do you no good. You may win fifty or sixty pound one night, and lose fifty or sixty the next, and then win it again, and then lose it again, and so keep on winnin' and losin', and if even you come off a winner at last, what good does it do you? It only leads you into bad habits, and sinks you in the eyes of the world. And then, that half dozen o' champagne."

"Did Charley tell you all this?" cried Tom, fiercely. "Because if he did, I'll kick him. *Was* it him?"

"No, Tommy, no; it was not. I haven't set eyes on him since last night. But, do you think, Tommy, that in a place like New-market, you can say or do anything in a public-house without havin' it talked about? Not a bit of it! It's safe to be carried all over the town. But, as I was sayin', about that champagne. Now, don't take what I say amiss, because that ain't worth while; but you might as well have thrown the money into the gutter. Look here. Suppose you'd given the money that that champagne cost you to some poor shiverin' wretch in the street. Don't you *think* you'd ha' done much more good with it? Wouldn't you ha' seen the tears start from his eyes? Wouldn't you ha' choked him with gratitude? Wouldn't he ha' thought that some angel from heaven had sent you to snatch him from despair?—and wouldn't you ha' felt much more happy? I don't mean to say that a man is bound to give away all his substance! No, Tommy, no; more t'other. But his natur' is softened, and his feelin's is pleased when he *thinks* of the poverty-stricken, and gives 'em that, which if he spends it, don't do him a mite o' good. But, settin' all this, you know, aside, there's *one* pint, which is the very settin' after all. There's Georgianny."

"Well," said Tom, impatiently; "and what's that to anybody? If I've made the thing all right with her, what has anybody else got to do with it?"

"Tommy, my boy! I'm not quarrellin' with you! You *shouldn't* take what I say amiss. Look at her! She is your wife, and an out-and-out angel of a wife she is. There's not many wives like her, Tommy, I can tell you that. If you'd *some*, they'd walk in and blow up, and bounce about, and slam the doors, and look black, and keep

on naggin' till all was blue! She's the t'other—quite the t'other. But, look you here. When you're out late o' nights—”

“Well, but this is the first time I *have* been out late!”

“I know: but look here. Take last night for a sample, Tommy. What must ha' been her feelin's? There she was—I know it as well as if I'd seen it—frettin' and stewin', and thinkin' all sorts of things; sometimes fearin' you'd broken your neck, and sometimes fancyin'—you know what—for there's no knowin' what wives think about, Tommy, you know, when they're sittin' up for their husbands.”

“I don't believe such a thought ever entered her head.”

“Well, I hope not, Tommy.”

“She's too good herself to think anything o' that.”

“Well, even supposin' she didn't, there she was—wretched, miserable, full of alarm. Now, ought such an angel as she is, Tommy—ought she to be served so for nothin'?”

“Now, look here, governor. I'll tell you what it is: I know it's wrong, and that's enough, and it ain't worth while to say another word about it.”

“Well then, Tommy, I'll say no more; but I wish you'd make me happy.”

“What do you mean?”

“Why, I wish you'd promise me faithful, that you'd never go to Jackson's again.”

“Well, I've no particular wish to go again.”

“Then, will you promise me you won't?”

“Yes, I will.”

“Then you're a trump. Give us your hand, and don't let us say a word more about it. You mustn't be angry, you know, because I mentioned the matter, Tommy.”

“Angry?”

“What I mean, you know, is, you mustn't take it amiss; because what I say to you, I don't say in any kind of quarrelsome spirit, but merely, you know, for your own good, of course; and as I want to see you happy and comfortable at home, and as I know you can't be if you form a connexion with such scamps as them, I thought I'd better mention it to you at once, that you might see the folly of goin' too far.”

“All right,” said Tom; “I know what you mean. I never intended to keep it up, of course; but you won't catch me going to Jackson's again.”

“That's right, Tommy; stick but to that, and you'll do.”

“But I say, you know, not a word to George about where I was, or what I was doing.”

“Why, what do you take me for? A lunatic? I wouldn't have her know it for the world. No, Tommy, no; I ain't lived all these years without knowin' a trick worth two o' that, neither. But come,

let's go in. She's been looking through that window *fifty* times. She's a wife, Tommy, she is, and no mistake—a regular out-and-outer. But, I say, has the colonel sent the horse?"

"Yes," replied Tom; "he sent it just before you came."

"Then we'll go and have a look at it presently; we *must* go in first and speak to George."

As they walked towards the house, Georgiana came to meet them, and having patted Todd's cheek playfully, said, "Now I know that you have been scolding him too much."

"Not at all," replied Todd. "Have I, Tommy?—now have I?"

"Why, you did walk in at first, you know, a little above a bit."

"Well, it's all right now, ain't it?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well," said Georgiana, addressing Todd, "it was very cruel of you; but as you have not quite broken his heart, I suppose you expect to be forgiven. But, indeed, I did not wish to have another word said upon the subject."

"Then," said Todd, "don't let's say another word about it now. It's all settled—all right—and the next thing I want is, to look at your favourite horse."

"You mean *your* horse, do you not?"

"Why, I don't know. I doubt I shan't feel exactly at home upon his back; but we shall see."

"Harry," cried Tom, "just bring out the grey, will you?"

The groom thus addressed at once entered the stable, and soon reappeared with Adonis.

"There you are," said Tom. "What do you think of him, eh?"

"Think!" replied Todd, "why, I think he's a *run* 'un."

"*Rayther* popular, eh?"

"He's a beauty. Fifty did you say, Tommy?"

"Is he *dear* at that?"

"Dear! He's dog cheap."

"Just give him a turn, Harry. There you are! That's about it! There's action, if you like, there; ain't there? Spicy, rather, eh? What do you think of him now?"

"I see what he is, Tommy: I see what he is."

"And now," said Georgiana, "allow me to make a suggestion. I should dearly like to have a ride this morning."

"Well, my dear?"

"Suppose, then, we go for a ride together?"

"What! saddle the grey for me?"

"Why, of course."

"He's too spicy, I doubt, for an old 'un like me."

"Not a bit of it," cried Tom. "He's as quiet as a lamb."

"Well, I don't mind tryin' him. Run away, my dear, then, and put on your traps."

"Harry," said Tom, "saddle the three, will you? And now," he added, "let's go in and have a glass of sherry."

"With all my heart," cried Todd; and they went in and had a glass of sherry, while Georgiana was putting on her habit; and when she was ready, and the horses had been announced, they at once proceeded to mount them.

While, however, Tom was assisting Georgiana to spring into her saddle, Adonis showed symptoms of restlessness. He looked round and snorted, and shook his head and reared, and became almost unmanageable.

"Quiet as a lamb, Tommy, is he?" cried Todd.

"Yes, if nobody's spoilt him," replied Tom, promptly. "I say, old boy," he added, going up to the horse's head, "what's the matter, eh? what is the matter? *Poor* old Dony! poor old fellow! who's been playing tricks with the poor old boy? There! you mustn't make a hole in your manners, you know. He's all right now," he cried, turning to Todd.

"I doubt not, Tommy."

"Do you get into the saddle: he'll be quiet enough."

"Well!" replied Todd, "let's try;" and he managed to mount, while Tom held the horse's head, but the moment Tom left him the horse reared and plunged, and shook his head and jumped about, and gave every indication of extreme dissatisfaction.

"It won't do, Tommy!" cried Todd; "it won't do. He is like a lamb, as you said: he *ships* like one."

"Oh, but you can stick on!" cried Tom.

"Stick on! No horse ever yet got me off. But I *ain't* a goin' at my time o' life, you know, to take all this trouble! *Catch* hold of his head."

"Dear me!" said Georgiana, as Todd dismounted; "I never *knew* him to be so naughty before. Perhaps, dear, he doesn't like to see me on Tartar?"

"That's it!" cried Tom. "I'll bet a million! That's it!"

"Well, I shouldn't be surprised," observed Todd. "It looks like it."

"Then I'll tell you what we'll do," said Tom. "We'll have the saddles changed. What say, George?"

"Oh, do so, by all means!" replied Georgiana, whom Tom then assisted to alight.

"I don't like you to risk it, my dear," said Todd. "If anything, you know, *should* happen—"

"Oh!" interrupted Georgiana, with a smile, "there is not the slightest danger. You'll see!"

The saddles were changed; and when Georgiana had mounted Adonis, he pricked up his ears and pawed the ground, and appeared to be perfectly delighted.

"Now what d'you think o' that?" cried Tom. "There you are, you see! He's just as wide awake as a Christian!"

"Wide awake!" returned Todd; "it's wonderful: it's what I call wonderful—but it's natur'."

He then attempted to mount Tartar. But Tartar wouldn't have him at all! He behaved even worse than Adonis had done, and eventually broke away from the groom; but returned, and stood by the side of Georgiana.

"We've wounded *his* sentiments now!" cried Todd. "*His* feelin's is hurt now, I'll bet ten to one! Here, Harry," he added, "bring out the old mare. I must stick to her after all."

The groom, with some difficulty, led Tartar in, and Georgiana amused herself by cantering round the lawn till the mare was brought out, when they started.

They had not, however, proceeded far, when they met Mrs. Brooke in her carriage, which stopped, and Georgiana rode up to the door.

"Were you going to call, dear mamma?" she inquired.

"Yes, my love."

"Shall we return?"

"Oh! by no means."

"Will you then allow me to enter the carriage?"

"Certainly, my love: oh, certainly!"

Tom in an instant dismounted, and having assisted Georgiana to alight, returned to his saddle, and took her horse in hand.

"I hope that you are well, Mr. Todd," said Mrs. Brooke, as Todd raised his hat respectfully.

"I thank you," returned Todd. "I hope you're the same?"

"I am better: I *think* that I am better. George, my love," she added, "why that is Adonis! Is it possible that the general has made you a present of it?"

"No, mamma: unhappily no."

"Then how came you by it," my love?"

"Thomas purchased it yesterday of one of papa's friends, Colonel Cartwright."

"Colonel Cartwright, my dear, I do not know him! But that is not extraordinary. The general, I suppose, *has* friends, although they are never presented to me. But are you sure, my love, that he is a friend of the general?"

"Oh yes, quite. I have at home one of papa's notes, in which he addresses him 'Dear Cartwright!'"

"A note having reference to the horse?"

"Yes, mamma: stating the price of it, and so on."

"Well, it certainly is strange, my dear, that Thomas should have met with this gentleman."

"It is; but how fortunate, is it not? And then the idea of my



having my old favourite again! He'll not suffer any one to ride him but me."

"Well, I saw the horse going away yesterday morning, but, of course, I had no explanation. It is singular, certainly. But Colonel Cartwright—"

"He was with us in India."

"Indeed! Colonel Cartwright! I cannot remember his name!"

"Oh, he knew us all there! He spoke to Thomas about me and Julia. And what do you *think*, mamma?—what do you think? He is coming to *dine* with us to-day!"

"Indeed, my dear!"

"Yes! He is, Thomas tells me, a most *agreeable* person, and it will be so delightful to have the scenes which we witnessed there recalled to one's memory."

"But I cannot for the life of me recollect the name!"

"Nor can I! But of course I was very young then; quite a child. Still I shall remember him, I've not the slightest doubt."

"But how, my dear, did Thomas become acquainted with him?"

"Why, having the horse to sell for papa, he was strongly recommended—of course by some one who knew us—to let Thomas have the first offer. He therefore rode over and mentioned the fact, and when Thomas found that it was Adonis, he—like an affectionate creature as he is—knowing that I should like to have my favourite horse again, purchased him, and he was sent home this morning."

"Then he had no previous knowledge, my dear, of Colonel Cartwright?"

"Not the slightest! nor had the colonel any previous knowledge of *him*. He was perfectly *amazed* when Thomas told him who I was. However, they had a long conversation together, and the result was, that he sold the horse; and accepted, apparently with very great pleasure, an invitation to dine with us to-day."

"Well, my love! I wish that I could join you; but that, of course, is out of the question."

"Oh! if you *could*, mamma, I should feel *so* happy."

"I know that you would, my dearest love," said Mrs. Brooke, kissing her fondly. "I know it, and things, my dear girl, must soon come to a crisis! I feel that a crisis is at hand, for I will *not* endure it much longer."

Georgiana fell upon her neck and wept.

"This gentleman," she continued, "may influence the general; he may inspire him with feelings more worthy of a man than those which animate him now. Heaven grant that he may!"

"He has promised," said Georgiana, "he has already promised to influence him by all the means at his command, and I feel quite certain—"

"The general's coming!" cried Tom, riding up to the carriage. "He's not above five hundred yards off."

"I care not," replied Mrs. Brooke, "I care not."

"Yes, *dear* mamma," exclaimed Georgiana, "do, for your sake, pray let me get out."

"There's plenty of time," said Tom. "He's coming along slow. You can mount, and we can turn, and he'll then be none the wiser. James, open the door; look alive."

"God bless you, mamma," exclaimed Georgiana, passionately, "*God* bless you, *dear* mamma; see me again soon."

She then alighted, and, with the assistance of Tom, sprang into the saddle, and when Tom had re-mounted, they turned into a lane.

Mrs. Brooke, however, ordered the carriage to proceed, and the general, who had seen Georgiana alight, and spring into the saddle hastily, passed without taking the slightest apparent notice, save that of mechanically acknowledging the salute of the servants, by lifting his finger to his hat.

Georgiana, in the mean time, felt extremely nervous; and even when she knew that the general had passed the lane into which they had turned, she could not subdue her emotion. Todd, however, succeeded in rallying her at length, by turning her thoughts to something of a more agreeable character, and when they had been out for about two hours, they made their way back to the Box.

"Well, and now," said Todd, on their return, "the question is, what are you goin' to do with yourself, Tommy?"

"Why," replied Tom, "in the first place, you know, we're going to have lunch! after which, I'm agreeable to anything you like."

"Well, you know, I must go back and tiddivate."

"Well, I'll drive you over if you like; I'll do any mortal thing. What d'you say? *Shall* I drive you over?"

"Yes, Tommy, do; and then we can come back together in comfort. The stirrups, I find, makes holes in my stockin's, and that, you know, don't look exactly the thing."

"By no means," said Tom. "Well, then, let it be so. We'll just have a snack, and be off."

They then sat down to lunch, to which they did ample justice, and when they had most satisfactorily finished they started at once for Newmarket.

On their arrival, Todd immediately went up to dress, and Tom opened a bottle of sherry, and having lighted a cigar, he sat and smoked, and thought deeply of the lecture which his father had given him that morning.

"He's quite right," said he to himself at length, confidentially—"quite right, and no mistake about it. It *was* sly to go out so. Not at all popolor. Not as a gentleman ought to have done it. Snobbish

—very—nothing like the thing. And it *was* gambling; fifty pound was gambling, twist it how you may, and nothing but. And such fellows as them *can't* do me no good—that's quite clear—but may do me harm. Nobs don't go to public-houses, nor don't ought—a cut above it, rayther—no more don't ought I. And it *was* wrong to keep out so late—can't deny it—it was wrong to keep George up, fretting and stewing, and wondering what had become of me—very wrong—not at all the ticket—and don't ought to be, because she *is* an out-and-outer, and as such don't ought to have her sentiments hurt. It won't do, Tommy—'t ain't right—'t won't half do! It's the first time, and as such why let it be the last!"

Having delivered himself to this effect he went over the whole of the points again, and continued to reflect upon their ramifications deeply until Todd returned to the bar.

"This is the dodge," said Todd, pointing to one of his insteps. "This is the way them blessed stirrup-irons serve me. It's what they call friction, you know: that is, friction. There'll be a hole in no time you'll *see*!"

"Then, what d'you want to send your foot home for?" cried Tom—"why don't you ride on the ball?"

"Well, I do when I think of it; but when I don't, the foot goes quite naturally in. But I say, come; it's past four, you know, Tommy—ten minutes past."

"Oh, there's lots of time yet. Here, sit down and have a glass of wine. I'll just finish this cigar, and then we'll cut it."

With somewhat more patience than he usually displayed, Todd sat down and had a glass of wine; and when Tom had smoked his cigar, out they started.

Meanwhile Georgiana had dressed for dinner, and when Tom returned to the Box he declared he never saw her look more "spicy" in his life. "But," he added, "I must go and make myself look a little matters popolor, and ain't got no time to spare neither!" and he accordingly went up to change his dress, but more especially, to put on his favourite white-waistcoat, which had two additional collars inside, made of richly-figured pink and blue satin.

Well, at five precisely Maitland arrived, and Georgiana received him with her characteristic elegance. Tom had not finished dressing, but Todd grasped his hand, and gave him a most hearty welcome.

"I am glad to see you, colonel!" he cried. "Proud to know you! Tom 'll be down in a twinklin' He's only just gone up to put on his things."

Maitland smiled slightly, and, turning to Georgiana, proceeded to speak of the extreme beauty of the place.

"Here you are!" cried Tom, dashing into the room. "Well, how are you?—Eh?—Hearty? Glad to see you, and *no* mistake! That's her," he added, preparing to introduce him to Georgiana. "There

you are, you know. My little wife—Colonel Cartwright; Colonel Cartwright—my little wife. That's my old governor, that is, you know. He's a rum 'un, but a good 'un. Some say that he's an out-and-outer; but this I'll say myself, the longer you know him the better you'll like him."

"Of that," said Maitland, "I have not the slightest doubt."

"Oh, that's all right," cried Tom, as Georgiana looked at him significantly. "That's right enough. He don't mind my rough way. Do you, colonel?—Eh? *We* understand each other?"

"Perfectly."

"Of course! But, I say, do you remember her?"

"Well," replied Maitland.

"Was she as handsome then as she is now?"

"Tom, dear!" said Georgiana,—“really you are *too* bad.”

"Well, but you know—was she, colonel? That's the question—was she?"

"Not quite," replied Maitland, with a smile. "Not quite."

"I should say not," pursued Tom, as Georgiana blushed, and felt somewhat embarrassed. "Eh, governor?"

"Why," returned Todd, with a most profound expression, "there's particular sorts of beauty; there's the beauty of children, and the beauty of them which is grown up. When children are beautiful they look like little angels."

"And them which is grown up," cried Tom, "look like big 'uns."

"You know Julia Storr?" said Georgiana, addressing Maitland.

"Oh, perfectly well. Have you heard from her lately?"

"Not lately," replied Georgiana, with some little hesitation. "Not lately."

"I should be indeed highly pleased to see her again. She is, I believe, in London at present."

"I believe so."

"The general told me that she was down here on a visit some time since. Is she the same merry, light-hearted girl?"

"Just the same—"

"She's a rattler," interposed Tom. "She's what *I* call a rattler—she is!"

Dinner was now announced; and when Georgiana took Maitland's arm, Tom whispered to Todd, "Come it popular, you know!" and, having offered *his* arm with unexampled grace, he and Todd thus "popularly" followed.

The room in which they dined was most elegantly furnished. There was everything in it which the most refined taste could suggest, and yet nothing to indicate the slightest fondness for display. This, to Maitland, was, at a glance, perceptible, and while it induced him to reflect upon the position to which he had sunk, it prompted him to pant for the recovery of that from which he had fallen. He

felt it indeed deeply. Even while conversing with Georgiana in the most pleasing strain—passing the most refined compliments, and displaying the most accomplished social eloquence, he felt that, with such a wife, and in such a place, those principles of honour, which in his youth he had cherished, but which he had since repudiated, might be restored to him, and that he might again become happy.

"Come, you don't eat!" cried Tom, during the second course. "Send I may live! cut away."

"Indeed, I am doing excellently well," replied Maitland.

"Well, make yourself at home, you know! That's all. Because, if you don't, I shan't like it so well! Can you play a tidy knife and fork generally?"

"Generally I *can*," replied Maitland, with a smile.

"Well, then, cut away now! George, don't talk to him so much, you give him no time to eat at all!"

"Very well, my dear," said Georgiana, playfully. "Colonel Cartwright," she added, as Maitland again smiled, "you and I must not for five minutes exchange another word."

Like many other treaties this was ratified but to be violated: for both parties almost immediately recommenced, and continued to converse till the cloth had been cleared.

Maitland's first grand object was to inspire Georgiana with a high appreciation of his gentlemanly bearing and conversational powers. He, therefore—knowing that when she had retired he should have an opportunity of pleasing Tom and his father by the pursuit of a different course—confined the chief topics of conversation to the elegances of life and the scenes which he had witnessed in India, and this he did with such consummate tact, that Georgiana, who was perfectly delighted, remained at the table till nine o'clock, and even then reluctantly withdrew.

"Well," said Tom, when she had gracefully retired, "now the petticoat's vanished let's have a glass round."

"With all my heart," cried Maitland, promptly; "and, after that, I'll give you a toast."

"That's about it," cried Tom. "Bravo! now we're alive. Here's to you. Now, governor, catch hold. Here's jovial good health to us all!"

"The same to you, Tommy," replied Todd. "Colonel, I'll give you success to your present undertakin'."

"What's that?" inquired Maitland.

"What is it! Why, you're after a wife! It's no use your blushin': I know you are: I know it! and hope you'll get one which 'll answer your purpose."

"Thank you," returned Maitland; "thank you. And now," he added, rising, "I'll propose to you the health of an amiable, elegant lady, whom you know, and most highly esteem. The pleasure which

I have experienced in her society this evening is inexpressible. She is an ornament to her sex."

"That's true," said Todd.

"I admire her calm and gentle bearing. I admire her taste."

"I knew you would," cried Tom; "I knew it: I knew—"

"Hold hard!" said Todd. "Tommy, don't interrupt the colonel. Shut up, you know! Come, come; shut up!"

"And, above all," pursued Maitland, "ay, above all, I admire her brilliant intellect. She has a mind which imparts additional lustre to her beauty."

"That's true," said Todd; "that's true."

"Who's interrupting now?" cried Tom.

"Hush, Tommy; hush!"

"And I'm perfectly sure that she has a heart inspired with the purest, the sweetest, the kindest feelings of which our nature is susceptible. Gentlemen, I propose to you the health of Mrs. Todd, whom I knew in childhood, and for whom I entertain the very highest respect."

"Bravo!" cried Tom. "You're an out-and-out trump. Send I may live, though, that's popular, rayther. Here's George's most jovial good health! And now for the musical honours.

For she's a jolly good *fel-low*—"

"No, no, Tommy; shut up; 't won't do," cried Todd. "It ain't popular, not for a *lady*!"

Maitland laughed heartily; and having suggested that three times three cheers should be given instead, he led them with "Hip, hip, hip!" to "Hurrah!" and they certainly made *all* the noise of which they were capable.

"Now, Tommy," said Todd; "rise, you know, popular."

"What for?" cried Tom.

"To return thanks, of course."

Tom accordingly rose, and said, "Look here. Now, you know, I ain't much of a fist at a speech; but all you've said, I agree with. You couldn't have given her character nicer. You've done it, and no mistake, to a turn; and, as such, without further preface, I'll drink all your very good healths."

"Good," cried Maitland; "very good, *very* good."

"Ah," said Todd, "you did it pretty middlin'; but you can't come it like the colonel."

"Send I may live!" cried Tom. "Come it like the colonel. How could any mortal flesh expect it?"

"Well; *that's* true," returned Todd; "that's true."

"Like the *colonel*," resumed Tom; "I only wish I could. Only let me just come it like him and I'd beat all flesh into fits."

"You did it very well," observed Maitland; "very well, indeed. You spoke to the purpose, and that's what I like."

"Well," said Todd, rising; "and now *I've* a health, and one which I'm proud to give. It's the health of our friend, Colonel Cartwright."

"Bravo!" cried Tom; "that's about it."

"I know," continued Todd, "I know, by the very look of him, that he's an out-and-outer; I *know* it; and when I see him here you know, makin' himself at home, and speakin' as he has, you know, of her which I love like my own little girl which is now among the angels in heaven—God bless her—I honour his feelin's; I shall always respect him, and I'd knock any man alive down, which would offer to hurt a single hair of his head. That's my sentiments, and no mistake about it, and as such I'll give you his very good health."

"I say," said Tom, "governor! send I may live; that's coming it rayther! Eh?"

"We *do* come it sometimes, Tommy," said Todd. "We *can* come it when we like, a little."

"Gentlemen," said Maitland, as he rose, "I beg to acknowledge the compliment you have paid me, I am happy to know you both; I am proud of your good opinion, and I hope that our friendship may last for ever."

"Capital," cried Tom, "safe to do! Bravo!"

"And now," continued Maitland, "before I sit down, allow me to give you the health of one who has all the feelings of a gentleman, without any fuss or affectation. His heart, I am certain, is in the right place. Open, generous, candid, straightforward, and kind; he is just the man whose character I admire, and who is calculated to command the world's respect. He is a man in whom any one can see at a glance there is nothing like meanness or hypocrisy, and as that man is my excellent friend, Mr. Thomas Todd, I propose his health with infinite pleasure."

"Very good," said Todd, "*very* good. Tommy; good health to you. May you never forfeit such an opinion as that!"

"All right, governor; thank you," said Tom. "Thank you colonel; thank you. I rise," he added, "to say my sentiments, for the honour you've done me in drinking my health: I hope you'll always find me right up and down straight, and as such, I'll drink all your healths in return; but before I've done, just let me give another health, and that's the health of the governor, which is a *good* sort, and there's no mistake about him."

"I drink it with pleasure," said Maitland.

"Governor, good health," cried Tom. "Now for something popular and spicy."

"I rise," said Todd, "to return my thanks for the honour you've

just now done me. I'm a man of a few words, but this I'll say, I never wronged mortal flesh of a penny! My station in life has not been very high, but I've always kept respectable *in* that station, and now I'm a-goin' to retire from business, I shall do so without any good man's curse. I'm gettin' now old in the tooth, as you know, and I can't, of course, expect to last many years longer; but that makes no odds to my feelin's: I hope when I'm gone, to find them which I've lost, and that hope I know in my last dyin' hour, 'll cheer me, and tell me to smile. It's a comfort to look back upon a long life of honesty; it's a blessing to be able not only to say, but to *feel*, that you never robbed or swindled mankind of a penny. It's when you get old that you think of these things, and if you *can't* charge yourself with anything of the sort, you feel happy in your mind; you can hold up your head, and look any man alive in the face; I've had troubles, of course,—and what man has not?—but I've managed, you know, to get over 'em somehow, and now I only wait till it please God to call me."

Maitland, during the delivery of the latter part of this speech, watched the countenance of Todd most intently. He was at first apprehensive that Todd was speaking *at* him, but when he became satisfied that he was not, he felt every word which he knew to be applicable to him acutely.

"Well," said Tom, "what shall we say after that sermon? Why, you'd make a spicy methodist parson! What shall we say?—I'll tell you; we'll just drink the health of the universal world, wives, families, kids, and connexions, and then have a poplar bottle of mulled claret."

"There is, however, one in the world," said Maitland, "whom I wish to particularise, and that is the general."

"Hear, *hear*!" exclaimed Todd.

"He is a man of strong passions—a stubborn man, and doubtless we shall experience no slight difficulty in reconciling him to his amiable daughter; but that we shall eventually do so I feel well assured, and as I now pledge myself to assist in bringing about this reconciliation by all the means at my command, I'll give you the health of General Brooke; may he live to clasp his fond child again to his heart, and to re-inspire all the pure feelings of a father."

"Bravo!" cried Tom, as tears gushed from Todd's eyes, "that's better, *that's* better. The general's good health; and now I'll just ring for the claret."

The claret was ordered; and Todd, in a most feeling strain, explained his views on the subject to Maitland, and, having thanked him warmly for the interest he had taken, and begged of him earnestly to exert all the influence of which he was capable, he concluded by expressing his conviction that if the general knew how



much the happiness of Georgiana depended upon his forgiveness, he would at once forgive her, if indeed he in reality possessed the feelings of a man.

"*Now* then," cried Tom, when the claret had been brought, "here you are! Tell us what you think of that! Eh? That's rather popular, ain't it?"

It was at once pronounced to be delicious, and soon after that they rejoined Georgiana, with whom they had coffee, and whom Tom induced to sing; and when they had spent a most delightful hour in the drawing-room, Maitland and Todd, who were now "bosom friends," took leave, and rode back to Newmarket together.

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## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE PROJECT

FROM that time Maitland became a constant visitor. Georgiana—whom he treated with the utmost respect—esteemed him highly; and while Todd regarded him as a friend indeed, he soon acquired unbounded influence over Tom, who had the most perfect confidence in him.

This confidence had no sooner been gained, than—urged by the general, whom he frequently saw, and, at the same time, prompted by a desire to make a "hit," which might enable him to withdraw from his degraded associates—Maitland set to work; and having laid his plans so that the general might suffer, while he and Tom reaped the advantage, he appointed a time for the partial explanation of his scheme, and met the general at the Rutland Arms.

"I have hit upon a scheme," said he, after a few preliminary observations—"a scheme which must inevitably bring down this son-in-law of yours; but as I am comparatively unknown here, I must have your indirect assistance."

"That you shall have," returned the general; "but explain."

"There will be, as of course you are aware, a most important race on the twentieth. Well; in that race there is a horse called 'The Flying Machine,' with which not one of those that have been entered can live half the distance. He is a most splendid horse. He is already backed at even against the field; and I have not the slightest doubt that, before the day of the race, the betting on him will stand at two to one."

"I have heard of him," said the general. "I understand that the rest have no chance with him at all."

"Not the slightest. Not one of them can *touch* him. Well; the jockey who will ride that horse, I know: I have known him for some time. I know him well. I, moreover, know that he is to be bought. Now this hopeful son-in-law of yours I can do almost anything I like with: he is now, I may say, completely under my control; and my object is, to get him to back this horse."

"To *back* him? To bet against him, you mean, of course. Go on."

"I mean to *back* him."

"What, when he's sure to win?"

"Just allow me one moment. My object, I say, is to get him to *back* the horse; and having done so, to buy this respectable jockey."

"I see; I understand. Ay, well?"

"Well: now about your indirect assistance. In the betting-ring he is unknown, of course, and so am I; but we must find some responsible man for him to bet with."

"Certainly."

"Well, then, all I want you to do is, to take his bets."

"I take his bets?"

"Privately, of course—through an agent."

"Why don't *you* bet with him?"

"I must lead him on!"

"Well, but why don't *you* employ an agent?"

"What! Are you not aware that no responsible agent would undertake to bet to any amount for me? There is not one that would do it! I tell you candidly that I propose some advantage to myself in this matter—that I should enter with you into some business-like arrangement—that, if through my instrumentality, you won, say ten thousand pounds, I should expect to have five thousand of it!"

"Oh! that I would willingly agree to! Nay, I would even go further: I'd not only give you one half the amount, but I'd pay whatever sum might be required to secure the jockey if I entered into it at all!"

"You see," resumed Maitland, "five thousand pounds to me would be a fortune. It would set me up again. You must therefore feel perfectly certain that if it be *possible* for me to gain it—and that in this way it *is* to be accomplished, I feel quite convinced—I shall not let *such* a sum slip through my fingers. With respect to the jockey, the thing is not to be done by giving him a certain sum to lose the race. That would not be a safe proceeding. It must be done in the shape of a bet. For example: we must get him to bet—of course privately—say two or three thousand against the horse. If he'll do that—and I'm sure that he will—he'll not lose the money, that's perfectly clear."

"Well, Maitland," said the general, "your plan, I must confess to you, *appears* to be a good one. If this jockey *can* be bought over, why, of course, the thing is done."

"And that he can, I am perfectly sure. I know him too well to entertain a doubt about it."

"Well, I'll think of it, Maitland: I'll think of it. I'm not disinclined to enter into your views. I'll turn it over in my mind. I don't like to do things hastily. I'll think of it, and let you know the result in the morning. Or, I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll come over this evening."

"What time?"

"Oh, say eight."

"Shall I meet you here?"

"Do so. And in the interim, if you have an opportunity, you can sound not only the jockey but this vulgar *low-bred dog*!"

"I'll see them both: I'll sound them both, and I shall be able to manage them both."

"Then, at eight o'clock you'll meet me here?"

"I will."

"Very good. Ascertain all you can. I'll have that *wretch* brought down in some way."

Maitland, well satisfied with the progress he had made, then left him; and having engaged a horse at the White Hart, rode over at once to the Box.

Tom, who ran out to meet him at the gate, was, as usual, glad to see him; and, having greeted him with all his accustomed cordiality, called one of the grooms to take his horse.

"I can't stop," said Maitland.

"Rubbish!" cried Tom. "Now you're here, you don't go just yet, I'll bet a million."

"I want your advice," pursued Maitland.

"That's good! *My* advice! What about?"

"About a horse. As I'm not at all inclined to depend upon my own judgment, I want to have the benefit of yours."

"That's popular," said Tom, as he raised his hat and smiled. "You do me proud."

"You have heard of the Flying Machine?"

"What, the crack?"

"Yes."

"Of course."

"Then, I want you to look at him. Will you go?"

"Send I may live, I should like it. But when?"

"Oh, we'll go at once, if you have nothing to do."

"Well, come in, and have a glass of wine, you know, and speak to George. Harry! just saddle the bay."

They then entered the house; and as Maitland took Georgiana's

hand, he observed that he knew that she would scold him, as his object was to take Tom out for an hour.

"No, indeed I will not," replied Georgiana, archly. "In your society I *know* that he is safe."

"What d'you think of that?" cried Tom. "Call that nothing? She don't know all, I say; does she?—Nor half. *Here* you are," he added, producing the wine. "Help yourself. I'll put on a little more popular coat, and be back in the space of a twinkling."

As Tom left the room, Maitland introduced the subject of the forthcoming races; but he had scarcely begun to portray the anticipated scene, when Tom returned, and pronounced himself ready.

"The colonel will return with you, dear, will he not?" said Georgiana.

"Of course," replied Tom. "Of course."

"No, indeed; I really cannot to-day," said Maitland.

"We'll see about that," cried Tom. "Now, let's be off."

Maitland accordingly took leave of Georgiana: and when Tom had privately followed his example, they started.

"An immense amount of money will be won on this horse," observed Maitland on the road.

"I shouldn't wonder," returned Tom. "According to report, he's a blazer."

"He is, I understand, in every point perfect. If, when you have seen him, and formed your own judgment, you say he comes up to *your* standard of excellence, I'll have a cut in. I may as well win a few thousands as not."

"Of course! Why shouldn't you?"

"I have not made a book *very* lately, but I will do so if this horse should come up to the mark; and I know that I can safely depend upon your judgment."

"Well, I can't say so much about that," returned Tom. "Perhaps I know what a horse is, and what he ought to be."

"I know that you do, as well as any man in England, and therefore it is that I want you to see him."

"Very good! Then we'll have a look at him. I'll tell you all I know. We'll see what he's made of."

On reaching the White Hart, Maitland, who knew pretty well where the jockey would be, went to see him at once, leaving Tom at the inn.

"Frank," said he, having greeted him cordially, "can you give a friend of mine a look at the Machine?"

"Well, I don't know," replied Frank. "Who is he?"

"The Squire."

"What—the curriele swell?"

"Yes."

"Well, I don't know. I *could* do such a thing."

"Then I wish you would; it may be advantageous to us both."

"In what way?"

"I'll explain all that another time. No matter who's there, you know. He only wants to see him."

"Well!—When?"

"Now, if you like! He *is* at the White Hart."

"Very well. You may bring him up at once, then. I'll meet you opposite the Horse and Groom."

Maitland then returned for Tom; and when Frank, on his pony, had joined them at the corner of the Soham Road, they proceeded together to the stables.

After some slight delay the horse was brought out, and a most splendid creature he was. Tom viewed him with feelings of the highest admiration; and having intimated by virtue of brief exclamations that he never saw a more perfect horse in his life, he quitted the stables with Maitland and Frank.

"You don't mean to think," said he, "that anything can beat the Machine, do you?"

"Beat him!" exclaimed Frank. "Nothing can touch him—nothing can live with him. He'll win in a canter, and laugh at 'em."

"Well, I should think so, unless there's some rum 'uns among 'em."

"There isn't one that stands half a chance! Compared with him, they're all cripples. There's only one that can come within a mile of him, and that's The Pet; but she's of no use against *him*."

"Then, it's a dead thing, I suppose?"

"Dead as a hammer. And yet the slightest odds in his favour are taken freely. But, of course, it ain't every one who knows what he is! It is not every one who has seen him."

"Of course not," said Tom. "And I feel much obliged to you."

"Don't mention that."

"Shall we have a glass of wine before we part?"

"I mustn't. I've got to lose a stone and a half before the race."

"Will you come and dine with me at five?" inquired Maitland.

"No, thank you."

"I'll order what you like."

"No, I mustn't."

"Well, then, come and have a bottle of soda-water with me afterwards."

"Well, that I'll do."

"At six."

"Yes; at six I'll be with you."

He then turned into the Greyhound yard; and when Tom and Maitland had reached the White Hart, they ordered a bottle of sherry.

"Well," said Maitland, "now that we are alone, tell me what you really think of this horse?"

"Well, I'll tell you what I think," returned Tom. "I think he's an out-and-out blazer. He's got *every* point a horse ought to have. I never saw a more perfect horse in my life."

"Then I'll have a cut in."

"I shouldn't mind having a cut in too!"

"Well, why don't you? I'll tell you what we'll do: we'll enter into a sort of partnership: shall we?"

"Oh, I've no objection! We needn't let the governor know anything about it, because, you know, *he'd* set his face against it dead."

"Well, there's no *necessity* for letting him know. We can tell him when we have won, if you like?"

"No, I wouldn't tell him anything about it, even then."

"Well, that I'll leave to you, of course, entirely; but I don't think that such an opportunity as this should be lost."

"Nor do I. Not a bit of it. *I'll* enter into it with you at once."

"But understand," observed Maitland, "understand this: that although I feel perfectly certain of winning, I'm not going in very far."

"Oh! I don't want to go in, you know, to any unpopular extent."

"Very good. But we'll win a few thousands between us. We'll at all events play a pretty *safe* game!"

"So that we can't, in any case, lose much? That's about it?"

"Exactly. And now let me see. We must make up a book! Shall I back the horse or will you?"

"Which you like!"

"Well, then, you back the horse, and I'll do all the rest."

"Very well. To what amount?"

"Oh, that we shall see! If we can't do all we wish, we must do all we can. I shall know more about it this evening. Frank will put me up to it, you know. I'll get all I can out of him to-night, and then you and I can arrange in the morning."

"Very good. *That'll* be about it. Then will you ride over, or shall I come here?"

"Oh, it doesn't matter which. I'll ride over."

"Well, do: come early and stop, and take a bit of dinner with us."

"I'll not promise that; but at twelve I'll be with you."

This having been arranged, Tom commenced an elaborate explanation of the various points of excellence a perfect horse developed, and having contended that, beyond dispute, the Flying Machine possessed *all* those points, he looked at his watch, ascertained that it was five, and hastily rode home to dinner.

Maitland dined immediately after he had left, and an excellent

dinner he ate. He was really delighted with the progress he had made, and contemplated the achievement of his object without a pang. He had had no affection for the general: he knew that the general despised him: he, moreover, felt that he was indeed despicable; but as he had never been invited to the Hall, and as he was perfectly conscious, of course, that the object of the general was not to benefit him, but to injure Tom, from whom he had received the utmost kindness, he conceived that he was perfectly justified in catching him in his own snare.

At six precisely, Frank arrived, and Maitland having thanked him for his politeness to Tom, commenced operations upon *him*.

"I suppose," said he, "there's no chance for the Pet or any of the others against the Machine?"

"Not the slightest," replied Frank. "They haven't half a chance. You'll see me take him to the post in a canter."

"Then of course it will be quite safe to back him?"

"Safe! back him to any amount! that's *my* advice. Take every bet you can get."

"I know a swell," said Maitland, "a most important swell, who is anxious to lay out a few odd thousands."

"What, against him?"

"No!"

"Ay, that's another thing; will he give any odds at all?"

"No, he'll bet even."

"Thousands do you say? How many?"

"Oh, two or three, or even four; he's not particular. Have you anything at all on the race?"

"Oh, I don't know! I've a hundred or two?"

"You back the Machine, of course?"

"Of *course* I do."

"Yes. Now look here, Frank, we are both in the ring, and I think that we have known each other long enough to be able to depend upon each other."

"Well?"

"Do you think that such *is* the case, Frank? If you don't think so, I'll go no further."

"But I do! I'm sure that you may depend upon me, and I think that I can depend upon you."

"Very good, then that's settled, as far as it goes. Now don't you think, Frank, that a very considerable sum of money might be made by this race?"

"Now, look here," said Frank; "let us understand each other. I know that you have an object in asking this question. Before I answer it, tell me what that object is."

"Very well; then it's now understood that we are both to be candid, and perfectly straightforward."

"Of course."

"Very good. *Now*, Frank, I know a man who is anxious to bet three or four thousand even."

"*Upon* the Machine?"

"Yes."

"Who is he? We are both to be candid and perfectly straightforward; who is he?"

"His name is Brooke, General Brooke!"

"What, the father-in-law of the curricie man? *His* name's Brooke, isn't it? Do you mean him?"

"I do."

"Well?"

"Well, he's anxious to bet three or four thousand even upon the Machine."

"Why?"

"Because, if the horse wins, he'll lose a large stake, and if he should lose, why he'll gain one."

"Then he's anxious to bet with *me*?"

"Of course."

"I understand. What will he bet?"

"Oh! three or four thousand."

"Will he bet five?"

"I don't know."

"Will you ascertain?"

"Yes."

"Well now, let me put this question to you; is he a man upon whom I can depend?"

"He is, most certainly."

"Very well, then, when you have ascertained whether he'll bet me five thousand or not, we'll talk the matter over again. But recollect this, if I *should* feel inclined to take his bet, I must have the thing perfectly clear—no nonsense, you know—I must not only see him and take the bet myself, but I must have good security for the money."

"Of course. That will be all right. Anything you propose in the shape of security he will accede to, I know."

"Very well. And now, as regards yourself. You, of course, know the risk I should run, while you would be perfectly secure; but in the event of my taking this bet, what would you expect as your share?"

"I'll tell you. I should expect that you would keep faith with me, and nothing more should I expect from *you*."

"What do you mean? You must, you know, be *candid* with me! If not, I'll have nothing whatever to do with it."

"I am, and will be, candid, Frank; and, therefore, when I say that I expect, and will have no money from you, I may add, that



in the event of your taking this bet, I shall gain as much by it as you will."

"That's enough. When will you see this General Brooke?"

"I shall meet him at eight, at the Rutland Arms."

"What, this evening?"

"Yes; and if I *can* get him to bet five thousand, I will; but in any case, I'll see you in the morning. He's a man of immense wealth, and of this you may be certain, that in dealing with him, you are perfectly secure."

"Very well," returned Frank. "In the morning I shall see you. Get him to make the best offer you can, and I'll tell you at once whether I'll accept it or not."

Maitland promised to do the best he could; and soon after that, Frank left him: and as it was then nearly eight o'clock, he walked slowly up to the Rutland Arms, where the general—who had already arrived—received him with great cordiality.

"Well, Maitland," he cried, "what news have you now?"

"What news I have is good," replied Maitland. "I have seen them both, and I've sounded them both, and, I *may* add, that I have secured them both."

"Well; you are certainly a man of business! but how did you manage?"

"I'll explain," replied Maitland; who then proceeded to relate to him all that had occurred at the Box, in the stables, and at the White Hart. "And now," said he, having related all this, "have you, or have you not, made up your mind?"

"I have," replied the general. "I have, Maitland, firmly."

"But how about the jockey's five thousand?"

"I do not care to win a single shilling. My only object is to get the money from that wretch. The jockey shall have the bet proposed. I'll bet him five thousand, and give him any security he likes to name. The other five thousand, of course, will be yours."

"Very well," returned Maitland. "Then that's understood. When will you see the jockey?"

"Oh! when you please!"

"Shall we say to-morrow morning?"

"Yes; that will suit *me*! And the sooner it's done the better."

"Can you come over early? Shall we say ten o'clock? or half-past?"

"Yes; say half-past ten. At that time I'll be here. And now we'll have a glass of champagne."

The champagne was ordered accordingly; and when Maitland had explained how the bet, through an agent, could be made, the general, who conceived, of course, that all was secure, ordered his horse, and rode back to the Hall.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## THE LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION.

MAITLAND having thus cleared the way for the achievement of the object proposed, lost no time in bringing about the settlement of those preliminaries by which alone the attainment of that object could be secured; for, at half-past ten the following morning, he and Frank went up to the Rutland Arms, where the bet was made with the general, secrecy enjoined, and satisfactory security given, and in less than three hours after that, not only had an agent been instructed to "lay out" the ten thousand pounds, but the bet had been actually taken by Tom.

This effected, Maitland changed the current of his thoughts; five thousand pounds he was certain to gain, whether the Flying Machine won or lost: but he had another object in view, to the accomplishment of which he now proceeded.

Georgiana had previously explained to him that she had several times written to Julia Storr; that neither of her letters had been answered, and that she felt convinced that the colonel had either intercepted those letters or forbidden Julia even to acknowledge their receipt; he, therefore, resolved on the adoption of a course which he conceived would enable him not only to return to the path of honour from which he had strayed, but to secure to himself that domestic comfort of which he had become enamoured; and, in pursuance of this resolution, he embraced the very earliest opportunity of reverting to the subject with the immediate view of obtaining the confidence of Julia, through Georgiana's instrumentality.

"How strange," he observed the day after that on which the bets had been booked. "How strange it is you do not hear from Julia! Surely your letters have been received."

"I have not the slightest doubt of that," returned Georgiana.

"They must have been, you know!" cried Tom. "Safe! If they hadn't they'd have opened 'em at the post-office, you know, and sent 'em back. *I'd* a letter once served so, I recollect well: so they must have received 'em, of course. But it's just like the colonel: he ain't a man, you know—not what I call a man—he's an article, he is; an artful unpopular article. I know him."

"I do believe," said Maitland, "that if Julia had received them they would have been answered in some way."

"Of course," cried Tom—"as a matter of course."

"Yes; of that I feel convinced," said Georgiana.

"And in all probability," resumed Maitland, "she has been won-

dering why you have neglected her so long. It is perfectly clear that she doesn't know where to address a letter to you."

"That she don't, I'll bet a million," cried Tom.

"I feel sure that if she did she would write," said Georgiana.

"Then why not let her know at once?"

"How am I?"

"Write to her again, and have the letter delivered into her hands."

"But how is that possible?"

"Oh! I'll undertake to do that. I *must* go to town in a few days—"

"Eh," cried Tom, "what do you mean?—What are you talking about?"

"I say that I must go to town in a few days, and I think that I may as well start to-morrow morning."

"Well, but how long for?"

"Oh! I shall return before the end of the week."

"Ah, well!—But you recollect the twentieth, you know."

"I shall not forget that. I shall be back long before the twentieth."

"Well, but you don't mean to say that you *are* off to-morrow morning?"

"Why, the sooner I go, of course, the sooner I shall return."

"Very good! But, send I may live, I'd no notion of your going. However, if you must you must, and the sooner you go and get back again the better. I wouldn't have you *not* be here on the twentieth for a trifle."

"Why the twentieth, dear?" inquired Georgiana. "Will anything particular take place on the twentieth?"

"Particular!—I believe you," replied Tom. "Rayther. That's the day of the crack race, and a glorious and popular day we mean to have of it? Eh? Don't we, colonel? Rayther?"

"I hope so. I certainly should not like to be absent on that day."

"Have you naughty gentlemen been betting then?" inquired Georgiana.

"I'll bet with *you*, if you like!" returned Tom. "I'll tell you what I'll do with you, come now: I'll bet you a dozen of gloves I name the winner?"

"Don't take that bet," said Maitland, smiling. "Bet him a dozen of gloves that *you* name the winner, and I'll tell you which horse to name."

"Ah! but send I may live, you know, that won't be fair!"

"Was your bet a fair one?" inquired Georgiana.

"Of course!" replied Tom.

"Then mine cannot be unfair; and, therefore, I'll bet you."

"Well, I don't mind for once: *I'll* have you. Now, then, which horse do you name?"

"Flying Machine," suggested Maitland.

"Very well. Then have him. If he wins of course you win the gloves; if any other horse should win, you know, it's more the other. You understand?"

"Perfectly," replied Georgiana.

"Very well. And now, I say, about your going off to-morrow, colonel; how do you go?"

"I may as well go up by one of the early coaches."

"And is it likely," inquired Georgiana, "that you will see Colonel Storr?"

"Yes; but whether I see him or not, if you will write a letter to Julia, I'll undertake, with pleasure, to deliver it to her—if, indeed, she be in town."

"You are very polite. I *will* trouble you. I should so like to hear from her."

"And that you *will* hear from her immediately after your letter has been received, I have not the slightest doubt. By-the-by, you can say that as I shall return in a very few days, she may as well deliver her answer to me."

"I will do so. That will be the better way. She will have an opportunity of seeing you, of course, more than once?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Well," said Tom, "when you see her, don't forget to give my love to her, you know! I like her, send I may live if I don't. She's a trump, she is, and no mistake! a right on spicy, popular trump. Blest if I wouldn't give *any* money to have her down here, you know, a little while with George."

"You *may* have her down here," said Maitland, significantly.

"What!" cried Tom. "Hold hard. What was that you said—eh? What was that?"

"I merely said you *may* have her down," returned Maitland.

"Why you don't mean to mean that you're after her, do you? Because, if you do, you know, *blest* if I ain't glad! I should like you to have her. Send I may live, if I wouldn't sooner *you* should have her than any other mortal flesh alive. I say now, tell us: *isn't* that about it now—eh? *am* I right—eh?"

"Why, I've not *seen* her since we were in India, and then she was quite a little girl—a mere child."

"What's the odds of that? Don't children sometimes take a fancy to each other, which grows up with 'em and ripens all at once when they meet as men and women—eh?—don't they? Besides, you know what she was, and if you haven't *seen* her since, you know, you've heard of her, haven't you?"

"Certainly I *have*."

"*Very well*, then! What's the odds of talking about not having seen her? It's all stuff! Now, ain't it—eh? Ain't it, Mr. Modesty?"

Ain't you just let the cat out of the bag? As the governor says, I *know* I'm right; and I give you joy, with all my heart, for she's just the one which 'll answer your purpose. Now isn't she, George?"

"I believe that she would be a most amiable wife, dear," replied Georgiana.

"Of course," cried Tom; "and be as happy as a bird. Now, I'll tell you what it is," he added, turning to Maitland: "you must promise me one thing, and that is this, that when you *do* marry her you'll bring her down here, if it's only for a month. Perhaps George and her won't suit each other, you know—*perhaps* they won't! Never mind, *we'll* see all about that: will you promise?"

"I will," replied Maitland, with a smile. "When Julia and I marry we'll pass, at least, the honeymoon with you."

"Very well," said Tom; "that's understood. We shall all be as happy as happy can be. They'll be puzzled to find a more popular lot. Lor! wouldn't you like it, George? Wouldn't you, now? Send I may live, though, how things come round!"

Maitland dined with them that day, and during dinner managed to convince Georgiana that Tom's conjecture was correct: for although he spoke of this contemplated marriage only in the most playful strain, he—designedly, of course—made it quite evident that that was in reality the object he had in view. When, therefore, Georgiana retired for the purpose of writing her letter to Julia, she—precisely as he had anticipated—spoke of him in the very highest terms, and felt really delighted with the prospect of Julia becoming the wife of him whom she highly esteemed, and who, in her gentle judgment, possessed every quality calculated to render the marriage state happy.

Tom, too, felt more satisfied than ever that this was Maitland's object, and, therefore, reverted to the subject immediately after Georgiana had left them.

"Lor," said he, "how precious glad I am to be sure! The notion, you know, of your marrying Julia. The notion's what I look at—the popular *notion*! Only *think* when she's Mrs. Colonel Cartwright! Just look at the thought of her being down here with my George! Won't they enjoy themselves? Rayther. Won't they? Won't they ride out together, you know, and sit and chat, and laugh and joke, and make us delighted to see 'em so happy? Why did you want to keep the thing so secret? Why didn't you let us know before? There are cases, of course, where it's wise to be secret—"

"And this is one of them," said Maitland, "for I anticipate some opposition."

"You do?—what, on the part of her father?"

"Yes."

"What's fathers made of? What are they *made* of? I never see

anything like it in my life. They can't have no feeling. They can't care a button about the sentiments of their daughters. It seems as if they didn't want to let 'em be happy. Send I may live, if it ain't right on cruel. Directly you get above a certain sphere down comes the father's opposition. Why what can he want to oppose you for? Ain't you as good as him *any* day in the week, and a precious sight better? Besides, ain't you both on you colonels? What does he want more? Does he want to get hold of a duke for his daughter? Perhaps you haven't got quite so much tin as he has: I don't know you haven't; but perhaps you haven't, and if you haven't, what's the odds of that? *She's* got plenty; I know she's got plenty, because my George knows her uncle left her a mint. If I, you know, as I was, had made love to her, why that would have been another thing, because the world would have called it a popular opposition; but the notion of opposing a man like you beats Moses."

"The fact is," said Maitland, "he and I had a quarrel in India. He wronged me, and, therefore, has never liked me since."

"Oh, that's it, is it! Well, so much the better, because you've no occasion much to study his feelings. Besides, you see, by marrying her you'll show that you bear no malice to the family. If I were you, I shouldn't care a button about all the opposition he could bring into the market. If I loved her, and she loved me, I'd marry her in spite of his teeth."

"Well," said Maitland, "I shall see. If she be what I expect she is—"

"You're safe to like her—make up your mind to that—safe! I know she'll answer your purpose: and she's safe to fall in love with you. So don't be faint-hearted. All you've got to do is to play your cards careful, and you'll be as right as the mail. But I say, you mustn't go to town, you know, without seeing the governor."

"I'll see him in the morning."

"If you don't, he won't forget it in a hurry, that's all."

"Oh, I should not think of leaving on any account without calling upon him."

"Very well. And now recollect this, that if you should want my assistance in this affair—and I've had, you know, a little experience—you'll send for me: that's understood?"

"You are very kind; but no such assistance as that which you contemplate will be required yet."

"Well, but, you know, what I mean is this: when it *is* required you'll let me know?"

"I will," replied Maitland, "I will."

"Very well. But I say, look here: I wish you'd just call upon Mildmay, will you? You'll find him one of the spiciest fellows going—a trump, a right on popular trump. He'll be *so* glad to see

you. *He'll* make you all right. When he knows you're a friend of *ours*, you know, he'll be fit to jump out of his skin. *Will* you call?"

"I shall be most *happy* to do so."

"Very well; I know you'll like him."

"From what I have heard of him I feel convinced of that."

"Then, I'll get George to write a sort of a letter of introduction. I'll go up and get her to do it at once. Hold hard—I'll be back in a twinkling."

He then left the room; and, on his return, spoke of Mildmay in terms of the highest admiration, and having drank his "jovial good health," Julia's "jovial good health," and "the jovial good health" of almost every one with whom they were connected, they rejoined Georgiana; and when they had, as usual, passed a most agreeable evening, Maitland warmly bade them adieu.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### MAITLAND'S INTERVIEW WITH JULIA.

ON his arrival in town Maitland engaged a suite of rooms immediately opposite the house in which Colonel Storr resided. He engaged them for a week, and having paid a deposit, and given references—with which he was always provided—took possession the following morning.

From the drawing-room, at one of the windows of which he established himself, he several times in the course of the morning, saw Julia flitting about. He knew that it was Julia whom he saw; for, although he could but imperfectly recognise her features, even with the aid of his opera-glass, the description which Georgiana had given him of her sufficiently convinced him of the fact. There she was: a finely-formed elegant girl, light-hearted, lovable, full of health and joy. He almost felt that he loved her then; but that he *could* love her fondly, passionately, he found it impossible to entertain a doubt.

About one o'clock a carriage drew up to the door, and Maitland, on looking at the arms through his glass, saw at once that they were those of the colonel.

"Now, then," he exclaimed, "I shall see her come out. She may come out alone, and if she should, I'll have a cab, and follow her. It may be useless, I know, but I must do as I've frequently

done before, trust to chances, and hope for the best. She is a prize, and, to secure her, every effort must be made."

He then rose, with the view of preparing to start; but he had scarcely left his seat when the colonel appeared and entered the carriage alone. On seeing him, Maitland convulsively started, and, breathing through his nostrils, he drew himself up, and clenching his fists tightly, cursed him.

"Villain!" he added.—"Perjured *villain*! But I shall yet have my revenge."

At this moment Julia appeared at the window, and Maitland became again calm, and gazed at her with an expression of admiration, and panted for an interview with her.

She did not, however, remain at the window long; for, no sooner had the carriage started, than she turned her head suddenly, as if addressed by some one in the room, and disappeared. But, although she was no longer there, Maitland still kept his seat, and watched, and almost prayed for her re-appearance. The feelings which he experienced then were altogether new to him—he had never before felt the peculiar emotions by which he was animated then; for, while Julia appeared to him to be the most lovely creature he ever beheld, the prospect of winning her inspired him with rapture, teeming with bright scenes of love and pure joy.

While, however, he was thus rapt in ecstasy, the colonel's door opened, and as Julia, attended by a servant, came forth, Maitland on the instant rose, and seizing his hat, followed.

"Now," he exclaimed, "my good star is in the ascendant. But how—how can I address her? I cannot introduce myself to her in the street! And yet, why should I not? How else can it be managed? We shall see: we shall see. Impetuosity may be fatal. Patience, patience; we shall see."

Having followed her thus through several streets with the full determination of introducing himself, even in the presence of the servant, should he have no opportunity of doing so in any other way, he at length saw her enter a silk-mercier's shop, and, as the servant took his seat on the bench by the door, he also entered, and almost incoherently expressed a wish to look at some gloves.

At that time there were several ladies in the shop, but Julia—whose object was to purchase some satin—sat near him, and when he felt sufficiently nerved to address her he approached, and, with a most accomplished air, said—"I have, I believe, the honour to address Miss Storr."

Julia turned her full eyes upon him with a slight inclination of the head.

"I have a letter," he continued, "addressed to you by a dear and amiable friend, whose name *was* Georgiana Brooke."

"Indeed," she exclaimed, as her countenance on the instant



lighted up. "From Georgiana. Oh! I shall be so happy to receive it. Pray sit down," she added, as the letter was presented. "Pray sit down, and tell me all about her. I do so long to hear. Is she well?—Is she happy?—really happy?"

"She is, indeed," replied Maitland, "most happy."

"I am overjoyed to hear it."

"She felt that you would be; she knew that you loved her still. But," he added, "that letter contains a request which, perhaps, you will do me the favour to read."

"Excuse me," said Julia, addressing the person in attendance, and, having opened the letter, she proceeded to read. "Dear me," she exclaimed, "now how cruel! Pray assure her, Colonel Cartwright, that I never received either of the letters of which she speaks."

"She feels already assured of that."

"But how very unkind. This accounts for papa speaking of poor George so harshly. But she is really happy?"

"As happy as she is amiable."

"Then," returned Julia, "she is happy indeed. The request," she added, having read the whole of the letter,—“the request, Colonel Cartwright, to which you have alluded is, that I would send an answer by you. Now, may I beg of you to give my dearest love to her, and assure her that the knowledge of her being happy has inspired me with joy. Pray tell her—”

"But will you not write to her?"

"Oh, I would write to her with pleasure, but, under the circumstances, I really dare not."

"I need not explain how delighted she would be to receive a note from you."

"Oh, but if I were to write, and the fact were to come to the knowledge of papa, I am perfectly sure that he'd never forgive me."

"May I submit that the fact need *not* come to his knowledge? Pray write; let me entreat you."

"But how if I should—how am I to convey the note to you?"

"I am staying immediately opposite the house in which you reside."

"Indeed! But I dare not send it over by one of our servants."

"It will be, I hope, unnecessary to do so. To-morrow, probably, you will be out for a walk; and as I live there I shall know, of course, when you leave the house. Might I suggest then the expediency of your again coming here?"

"It might be done in that way, certainly. I *will*, Colonel Cartwright—I will be here to-morrow."

"I shall then have the happiness of meeting you again."

"I presume," said Julia, archly, "that I may ascribe the fact of

your knowing me this morning solely to the circumstance of your having seen me leave home?"

"Oh! dear me, no," replied Maitland; "I knew you in India!"

"Is it possible!"

"When you were but a little girl I had the pleasure of dancing with you frequently."

"Indeed! Then that is what Georgiana means by employing the term 'our *mutual* friend.' But how stupid I am that I cannot now recollect the name. Then you know papa, of course?"

"He and I were then friends; but a misunderstanding arose between us."

"I am sorry for that."

"And so am I," returned Maitland. "I have felt," he added, gazing at her with a look of intense affection, "I have felt more sorry within the last ten minutes than I ever felt before."

"Well, but you may yet be reconciled?" said Julia.

"I hope so: for you have recalled to my mind the many joyous scenes in which we were engaged, when a certain little light-hearted girl—young as she then was—engrossed all my thoughts."

Julia blushed and felt somewhat embarrassed, but tried to conceal her emotion with a smile, as she observed, "There were many light-hearted little girls there at that time, among whom, you will remember, Georgiana was conspicuous. Oh!" she added, "how dearly I should love to see her. But that is, at present, impossible. I will, however, write to her, and to-morrow morning—you will not forget?"

"Forget!" cried Maitland.

He said no more. He took her hand, and having pressed it, walked out of the shop, to the utter amazement of the person who had been waiting to show him the gloves.

"Beg pardon, ma'am," observed that person to Julia, as soon as this shock of amazement had subsided, "that gentleman was looking at some gloves: will he return?"

"No; I'll purchase them for him," replied Julia, promptly.

"Oh! I beg pardon, ma'am," he repeated, in tones which proved that he felt somewhat better.

That Maitland was delighted with the progress he had made is a fact which may well be conceived. He felt perfectly sure that he had created a highly favourable first impression, and that with the powerful assistance of Georgiana, he should soon secure Julia's heart and hand.

"All *right*!" he whispered to himself as he left her. "Nothing could have been more fortunate. Animated, fascinating, elegant, and rich—she is indeed a prize. I *must* have her! Be calm: be calm," he added: "calm." And, turning into the first tavern he came to,

he sat, and not only dwelt on all that had passed, but let his imagination loose.

He dined there; and then at once returned to his lodgings, and while he was sipping his wine in the drawing-room he saw Julia timidly approach one of the windows. He rose immediately, and made his appearance as if by accident, and although Julia instantly withdrew, he distinctly perceived an opera-glass levelled at him as he stood.

Having remained there for some time—of course in the most elegant position he could assume—he seated himself so that he might just be distinguished, and taking up a book, watched anxiously.

Twenty times at least did Julia approach the window, in the course of the evening, and it scarcely need be added, that every time she appeared his hopes were strengthened. Her constant anxiety to catch a *glimpse* of him, was sufficient to confirm the conviction he had inspired, that he had already gained her heart, and he felt that nothing then but the pursuit of the course he had conceived was necessary to secure her hand.

Having sat until all the colonel's blinds had been drawn, he had coffee, and went to the opera, where he remained until midnight, wrapt in his own pleasant thoughts, and then returned with Julia's image still before him.

In the morning he rose early, and immediately after breakfast took his station as before. Julia approached the window several times, but about twelve o'clock she appeared in her walking dress, and remained until she was certain that he saw her. She then withdrew from the window, and when Maitland had seen her leave the house attended as before, he almost immediately followed.

Having entered the shop, Julia, who felt extremely tremulous, made a trifling purchase before Maitland arrived, and when he did arrive, she rose, and placing her trembling hand in his, displayed a greater degree of embarrassment than she ever before experienced.

"I am happy to see you," faltered Maitland, "most happy." And when Julia had resumed her seat, he sat as near to her as he conveniently could.

"I have written the letter," she observed, faintly, "and if you will deliver it on your return, you will oblige me."

"It will give me greater pleasure to do so than you imagine," said Maitland.

"Give my dear love to Georgiana," pursued Julia, "and tell her I am so glad she is happy. When," she added, "when do you think of returning?"

"I scarcely know," replied Maitland. "Perhaps to-morrow, or the next day,—I scarcely know yet. But as our amiable friend will, I am certain, be anxious to reply to this letter, how can that reply be directed?"

"Oh! she must not send to me on any account! If she should, papa will know that I have written."

"Can we not devise the means of enabling you to receive it without his knowledge?"

"Impossible! All letters are taken up to him the moment they arrive."

"Have you no friend to whom a letter could be enclosed?"

"I know not one in whom I dare confide. Yes," she added, after a pause, "there is a person whom I think I may trust! I do not distinctly remember her address, but when I have ascertained, I'll write to Georgiana."

"I'll remain in town, with pleasure, until you *have* ascertained," observed Maitland.

"But I dare not send it over to you."

"How do you propose," said Maitland, smiling, "to send it to Mrs. Thomas?"

"Oh, I should put it in the post! Why, dear me, how stupid! I could just as well put it in the post for you!"

"If you *were* to do so, the task which I have undertaken for Mrs. Thomas would be complete."

"Then I will. I'll enclose the address to you to-morrow. By-the-by, Colonel Cartwright," she added, with all her natural archness, "how many pairs of gloves did you intend to purchase yesterday?"

"Why, upon my word," said Maitland, who felt, and was pleased to feel a flush, on the instant mount from cheek to brow, "I quite forgot them. It was entirely your fault. I know that I left without purchasing any."

"And thus," continued Julia, "imposed upon *me* the necessity for purchasing some for you. Here are the gloves, Colonel Cartwright," she added. "I hope that, when you next leave a shop, you will not so completely forget the object for which you entered."

Maitland took the gloves; and having, with an expression of admiration, placed them in his bosom, said, "May I—may I ask you to do me the favour to remain here *five* minutes longer?"

"Oh," replied Julia, "I have to look at some lace, which will detain me much more than five minutes."

"I'll return as soon as possible," said Maitland, who at once left the shop, and proceeded to a jeweller's, where he purchased the most chaste and elegant ring he could select; and having enclosed it with one of his own cards, on which he had written—"To Miss Storr, as a token of the purest and highest esteem:" he sealed the envelope, and hastened back to Julia.

"I hope I have not detained you," said he, on his return.

"Oh! dear me, no, not at all," she replied; "I have but just completed my purchase."

The shopman was at that moment folding up the lace, which Mait-

land no sooner perceived, than giving him the packet containing the ring, he said, "You may as well enclose this with it."

Julia looked at him inquiringly; but Maitland took her hand, and having said, with the most intense earnestness—"God bless you! your words will be ever remembered: when I leave this place, I shall *never* forget the object for which I entered"—he bowed with the most perfect elegance, and left her.

The first grand step having thus been accomplished, it occurred to him, that as it would be advisable to return to Newmarket immediately after Julia had sent the address, and as he could not with any degree of propriety return without having seen Mildmay, he had better call upon him at once. He therefore proceeded to Mildmay's residence, and having sent up the letter of introduction with his card, he was shown into the library, where Mildmay received him with all his characteristic courtesy and warmth.

"I am," said he, "proud, Colonel Cartwright, to know you. I hope you left our friends at Newmarket quite well."

"Quite," replied Maitland; "and happy as ever."

"They deserve to be happy."

"They do, indeed: for Tom is a fine-hearted fellow, while his wife is one of the most amiable creatures I ever knew."

"The general, I fear, still holds out?"

"He does at present; but *he'll* be all right by-and-by."

"You know him, of course?"

"Oh, I've known him for years! He is one of my most intimate friends! I served with him in India!"

"Indeed; I am very glad to hear it, because, through your instrumentality, he may be induced to come round."

"Oh, he'll come round eventually."

"I hope so. But when do you think of returning?"

"To-morrow, if possible."

"To-morrow! Then you really must do me the honour of dining with me to-day?"

"I cannot: I should be most happy, but I have an engagement which I *must* keep."

"Well, then, can you not dine with me to-morrow, and return on the following day?"

"I will—for the pleasure of dining with you I will."

Mildmay bowed, and rang the bell; and, when the servant appeared, he directed her to bring up a bottle of sherry, and then entered into general conversation with Maitland, who remained there till nearly four o'clock, when he left with the view of dining, and then returning to his lodgings to watch the anxiety of Julia.

"Who's that?" inquired Mary, immediately after Maitland had quitted the house.

"Colonel Cartwright, my dear," replied Mildmay.

"Well, he's no great shakes, whoever he is."

"What do you mean, Mary?"

"I mean what I say. I say, whoever he is, he's no great shakes. A parcel of men talking about opera girls, and all such rubbish!—I hate such ways."

"Who has been talking about opera girls, Mary?"

"Why, *he* has. It's no use attempting to deny it. I *know* he has."

"Surely you have not been listening again?"

"Listening, indeed! It's high time to listen, I think, when men can't find anything else to talk about but such dirty rubbish as that."

"Did you not pledge me your honour, Mary, that you would never again be guilty of so mean an action?"

"*Mean*, indeed! Well, I'm sure! I suppose you think I'm to put up with *everything*. We all know what opera girls are. I ain't a child! We all know they're rubbish—we all know that! I suppose he wants you to be as bad as himself, and go amongst 'em. But I won't put up with it, mind you that. I won't have any such goings on. I'll *die* first. Opera girls! I should just like to catch you with one, that's all. I'd scratch her very *eyes* out! I'd let her know the difference. I'd tear everything she had on to tatters! I suppose he'll be bringing 'em here next. Let him. Let him, that's all—only let him. Let 'em come. If I wouldn't tear 'em limb from limb, I'm not here! I dare say, indeed. A pretty commence! But I'll not put up with it. That I'm determined, and so he needn't think it, whoever he is."

"Have you done?" said Mildmay, calmly. "Have you quite finished?"

"No, I've not. I never *shall* be finished while I see such goings on. 'She's a delicious creature, isn't she?' 'Oh, she danced divinely!' I heard him: I know very well what it means! I should only just like to catch her here, that's all. That's all the harm I wish her, whoever she is. I'd soon let her know what it was to be *delicious*! I'd teach her the *divinest* dance she ever learnt in her life: mind you that!"

"Why, Mary," said Mildmay, "as you have not displayed your natural temper for some time, I did hope that you had lost it, but I find you have it still—"

"Yes, and mean to keep it."

"Now don't be absurd."

"Absurd, indeed! A pretty how-d'ye-do. Pish!"

"Don't be vulgar, Mary: *don't* be vulgar."

"I'm no more vulgar than you are. But if you suppose that when I see—"

"Silence, Mary!"

"*Silence*, indeed!"

"I'll hear no more of these monstrous absurdities."

"I suppose I mustn't open my mouth next."

"Mary, you'll provoke me to speak harshly to you presently; and you know that I am at all times sorry to do that."

"Well, I don't know what *you* call speaking harshly, but if you think that when I see such goings on as this—"

"Now, what *do* you mean? You cannot know what you are talking about."

"I know what I'm talking about very well. The cap fits, I *find*, about the opera girls. But don't let 'em come here—that's all, William Mildmay—don't let 'em come here. They'd better not—I'd *skin* 'em!"

"Is it possible for you to be rational, Mary?"

"*I'm* rational enough: *I* see which way the cat jumps. I'm not blind, you know—I'm not blind. I heard him!"

"I know that you did, and I'm perfectly ashamed—"

"And well you may be."

"I'm ashamed of your having been guilty of so pitiful an act of meanness."

"That's all very fine; but if people do wrong I say they ought to be found *out*—that's what *I* say. Them which talk about nothing that oughtn't to be heard—"

"Them which talk about nothing'—psha! Mary, may I *beg* of you to be silent for one moment? Colonel Cartwright went to the opera last evening—"

"I know he did."

"He saw a new dancer—"

"I know that as well as you can tell me! I heard all about it."

"Then, if so, you heard him explain simply—"

"I don't know so much about that! I wouldn't give much for his simplicity!"

"Nonsense, Mary; nonsense."

"It may be nonsense, but—"

"Mary,—you really are a most provoking creature. You are pursuing the same course as before, and rendering it again necessary for me to tell you that I *will* not be thus tortured. I'll not live with one who appears to delight in thus annoying me. I never willingly annoy *you*."

"*Don't* you? Don't you annoy me by talking about your opera girls, and have a wretch like that to come and tell you they're *delicious*."

"That wretch, as you vulgarly term 'him, Mary, is an intimate friend of Mr. and Mrs. Todd."

"More shame for 'em to harbour him then. He shan't come here! I won't have him here!"

"He is coming to dine with us to-morrow."

"I won't dine with him."

"I expect that you will."

"So you may: but I won't, I am determined. I dare say, indeed. And, what's more, I'll spoil the dinner."

"Well, Mary, we shall see. But, let me tell you that if you do *not* dine with us, you and I shall come to an immediate understanding. I married you, Mary, with a view to domestic comfort, and if I cannot have it *with* you, I'll live alone. You should endeavour to understand your position, Mary. You should recollect that wives have *duties* to perform, one of which is to promote the happiness of their husbands by all the means at their command. They may think themselves secure, and, taking advantage of that security, feel justified in playing the termagant; but if they did but reflect that men do not marry to be tyrannised over, and that while they are making every effort, and straining every nerve, to secure the comforts of life and to render their wives happy, they ought *not* to be tyrannised over, they would wonder that husbands endure so much from wives whose chief object appears to be to annoy them. A woman, Mary, who could be, before marriage, all kindness, all gentleness, all devotion, and who immediately after marriage can break loose, and say in effect, 'Now I'm safe—my husband must support me; however kind he may be—however affectionate—however hard he may struggle to secure my happiness, I have a right to treat him just as I please,' is no wife."

"Well, but *I* don't say so!"

"You act as if these were your feelings—as if you felt that gentleness and devotion were necessary only *before* marriage. Do your duty, Mary, and be assured that I will do mine. Let us live in peace and harmony—let us have no more quarrelling."

"I'm sure," said Mary, weeping, "I don't want to quarrel. I never did! But, when I hear you talking about opera girls I can't bear it."

"There; do not be simple. While you behave like an affectionate wife you need not fear any opera girl. Come, give me a kiss. There, now run away and see after the dinner."

Immediately after Maitland had dined he returned to his lodgings, and sat at the window, from which he saw Julia several times, apparently more than ever anxious to see him. He had not, however, been sitting there long, when a note arrived, which he eagerly opened, and found the contents to be as follow:

"Miss Storr presents her compliments to Colonel Cartwright,



and begs to forward the address of the person to whom a letter may with safety be enclosed.

"She also begs to add that that which Colonel Cartwright directed to be placed in her parcel this morning, has surprised her. She cannot but appreciate the politeness of Colonel Cartwright, but as she knows not how in such a case to act, she must consult Georgiana on the subject."

Having read this note, he smiled and kissed it, and as he did so, he knew that Julia saw him.

"Now," he exclaimed, "the course is clear! 'She must write to Georgiana on the subject.' Good. She is very much surprised no doubt: very angry—so angry that she couldn't defer writing till the morning; I'll have her if it be *possible*, and that it is I feel convinced. She'll write to Georgiana. Well, before Georgiana can write to her again, she'll know that I'm desperately in love. She'll tell her so as a matter of course, and then will come my declaration. Harry, the clouds are clearing off!—you may be happy yet."

Having remained at the window until it was dark, he left the house; and being resolved to avoid all his old associates, went to one of the theatres, and entered a private box. The entertainments, however, had no charms for him. Julia engrossed all his thoughts. He sat, portraying vividly the varied features of that happiness which he conceived to be in store for him, until the curtain fell, when he gaily returned to his lodgings.

In the morning he again resumed his seat at the window, and again saw Julia flitting about, but as she made her appearance eventually in her walking dress, he felt quite at a loss to know how to act.

"Now," said he, "shall I or shall I not follow? Would it be advisable to do so or not? The course has been cleared; the foundation has been laid; shall I at present proceed any further? Leave well alone, Harry, leave well alone!—pursue the course you have prescribed, and risk nothing! Yet she may *wish* me to follow!—she may—"

At this moment the door opened, and Julia came forth, accompanied by the colonel!—which settled the point at once.

As four o'clock had been fixed for the dinner, Mary soon after one proceeded to dress, and as she managed to *complete* her toilet, by about half-past three she made her appearance in the drawing-room, in which Mildmay sat reading.

"Why, Mary," said he, on raising his eyes as she entered, "are you going to appear at any theatre to-night?"

"Theatre? no: at least not that I know of. Why?"

"Because, I perceive that you are dressed admirably to personate the character of a May-day queen."

"I wish I was a May-day queen," cried Mary, bursting into tears. "I shouldn't be taken to task in this way. I can't do anything right, I know. I'm sure I take all the pains I can to please you."

"I appreciate your desire to please me, Mary; but I cannot say that I admire your taste."

"I should like to know what you *would* have me put on. I'm sure it's a very pretty dress. You won't see a prettier dress in a day's march. There never was any one lectured as I am. I can't put anything on that you like—I'd better wear nothing."

"Mary, don't be absurd. My only object is to induce you to have a little more taste."

"I'm very sure I can't be more tasty than I am. I should like to know what you can find to complain of?"

"Why, look at those flowers hooked on to your hair."

"Well, I'm sure they're very pretty."

"Pretty! ridiculous."

"I should just like to know how you wish me to dress."

"I wish you to dress like a lady, Mary. You never saw a lady dress in *this* style. Do you think that Mrs. Todd, for example—"

"Of course not, she couldn't. Mrs. Todd can't do anything wrong: oh, dear no! You'd better have had Mrs. Todd, and then, perhaps, she'd have made you happy."

"Mary, let me beg of you not to be absurd."

"Then why do you *ding* Mrs. Todd in my ears. You're for everlasting going on about Mrs. Todd. I'm as good as her, I know, although she *is* Mrs. Todd. And as for her dressing, I never saw anything in it, for my part."

"You never saw anything ridiculous in it!"

"Of course not. She's everything. She couldn't do anything ridiculous. Besides, she's much prettier than me."

"She is not, in my judgment: and therefore it is that I am vexed when I see you thus absurdly attempting to add to your natural beauty. Were you an ordinary-looking person there might be some excuse for your wishing to adorn yourself in this way, but you don't *require* these things."

"Ah, it's all very well to get over me so, but I never call out about anything *you* wear."

"You would, if I wore wreaths of sunflowers, Mary, and stuck huge bunches of lilac in my hair."

"Of course, because men never wear such things. I should think it just as strange if you were to come down to dinner in one of my petticoats!"

"*Very* good. I like that. And now I'm quite sure you'll oblige me. Come, run away, and take the flowers out of your hair."

"What, the whole of them?"

"Ay, the whole of them. You'll look much more elegant; more

lady-like without them. What advantage is there in having a beautiful head of hair, if you conceal it in that way? Now, just let me show you how much better you'll look. "There," he added, having taken the flowers off, and kissed her several times as he did so. "You look like yourself again! See, what an improvement I have made! You now look *like* Mrs. Mildmay!"

"Well, you know it's no use one's having flowers at all, if one don't wear them."

"Certainly not. You are quite correct! You don't *require* them at all. It isn't as if you hadn't a fine head of hair! You have, and therefore ought not to conceal it. Shall I take these flowers up-stairs, or will you?"

"Oh, I'll take 'em up if I *mustn't* wear 'em. But I must say I think you *ought* to let me wear the wreath!"

"What, the sunflowers?"

"No, they're not sunflowers! they're roses!"

"*Roses* are they?"

"Yes, look; *that's* a rose!"

"Well, it's a rose on a very large scale! It's a foreign rose probably. I'll just take this off and submit it to Johnson—"

"There now!" cried Mary. "You've spoiled the whole wreath!"

"Have I? Well, it's a matter of no importance. I'll ascertain whether an English rose was ever known equal in point of size with that. Johnson can tell me I know; he's a judge."

To say that Mary was pleased with this proceeding, were to say that which is not particularly true; she, however, submitted with a good grace, *considering*, and then took the flowers away.

At four precisely, Maitland arrived, and Mary received him as well as she could, and when dinner had been announced, she, without a single moment's hesitation, took his arm, but felt tremulous in the extreme.

It will here, perhaps, be highly correct to state, that the dinner had *not* been spoiled: that everything was as it ought to have been, and that Maitland soon succeeded in winning the esteem of Mary, who thought him one of the most attentive and gentlemanlike persons she had ever had the pleasure to meet. Oh! he was really a dear of a man,—she positively couldn't have thought it!—so elegant in his manners! so kind—*so* polite!—she felt that she should like him to dine *every* day with them.

Of course Tom and Georgiana formed the principal topic of conversation, and Maitland, while speaking of them, portrayed so bright a picture of domestic happiness, that Mary began to feel very nervous; and while her eyes wandered from Maitland to Mildmay—who glanced at her occasionally, with very great significance—she thought that her William was not far wrong when he charged her with having neglected her duty. She, however, sat and listened to all in

silence; indeed, she scarcely uttered half a dozen sentences—and they were extremely short—from the time they sat down to dinner until she retired to the drawing-room, where she stood before the glass and formed a series of resolutions, having reference to her conduct in future.

Maitland and Mildmay now became extremely eloquent. They were both highly accomplished, both highly intellectual, and as both possessed an extensive knowledge of the world, and of the motives which prompt human actions, they suited each other admirably. Various were the topics they started, and brilliantly were they discussed: in fact, so delighted were they with each other's society, and so imperceptibly did the time pass, that when they went up to the drawing-room, they found that it was nearly twelve o'clock.

Mary—who had been fast asleep for two hours—started as they entered, and felt quite confused. The lamp was burning dimly, and the fire was out, for the servant had followed the example of her mistress. Mildmay smiled as Mary rose, and endeavoured to relieve her from all embarrassment, and raised the lamp and rung the bell, while Maitland apologised for having been the cause of their prolonged absence from her.

"Well, I hope you'll excuse me, Colonel Cartwright," said Mary, "but upon my word I don't know how it was."

"I hope you'll pardon *us*, my dear madam," said Maitland; "I have had such a highly intellectual treat, that I never once thought of the time."

The servant entered, trembling like an aspen leaf, but when Mildmay, with a smile, had ordered coffee, all was soon arranged; the coffee was produced, and about one o'clock Maitland rose, and with many warm expressions of esteem, took his leave.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE EXPLANATION.

IN the morning Maitland—having sent for a post-chaise, conceiving that as Julia would be on the watch, it would give more *éclat* to his departure than a cab would—sat down to breakfast near the window, from which he had the pleasure of seeing Julia several times most anxiously on the look out.

The chaise arrived at nine o'clock precisely, but Maitland detained it until a quarter past, when feeling quite sure that she was

waiting to see him off, he took his seat, gave the word "Epping," and started.

On his arrival at Epping he discharged the chaise, and waited for the coach, by which he proceeded to Newmarket, where Tom—to whom he had written the previous day—was in attendance with his curricule to drive him at once to the Box.

"Now," cried Tom, "jump in—just in time—Charley 'll see to your luggage—the governor's there—they're all anxious—jump in."

Maitland was very highly pleased with this attention, and when he had pointed out his luggage to Charles, he *did* "jump in," and off they started.

"Well, and how are you?" cried Tom; "pretty popular?"

"I never felt better in my life," replied Maitland. "How are you at home?"

"Oh, spicy! But I say, the crack's coming it. Six to four upon him—eh? What do you think of that? There's a slap hedge if we wanted to hedge! But I don't think we ought to hedge much—eh?—do you?"

"I think we are quite safe as we stand, but we shall see."

"Safe as a hammer! That's my notion of it. But, as you say, we shall see. Is there much talk about him in London?"

"All the sporting men, of course, are anxious."

"I should say so. Some of 'em 'll drop some tin, that's quite clear. But I say," he added, "what do you think of Mildmay?"

"He is one of the most agreeable and most intellectual fellows I ever met with."

"Didn't I say so? Didn't I tell you you'd like him?"

"You were right. I do. I like him much."

"And I knew he'd like you. I was quite sure of that. Did he talk much?"

"We were talking together till nearly twelve o'clock."

"A spicy talker, ain't he—eh? *Can't* he go along? Did you hear him play the piano?"

"No, we had nothing but conversation."

"George says he beats *her*. But he won't have that. Still I don't think there's much odds between 'em. Did he talk about us?"

"Quite sufficiently to convince me that he holds you in the highest possible esteem."

"He's a good fellow and no mistake—a jovial good fellow. Send I may live, I'd do anything for him. What do you think of Polly?"

"Polly?"

"Ay, his wife."

"Oh! she appears to be a good, quiet creature."

"She can come out sometimes when she likes, you know: but she ain't a bad sort, for all that."

They now reached the gate, and, as they drove round the lawn, Georgiana and Todd came out to meet them, and taking Maitland, the moment he had alighted, by the hands, they cordially welcomed him back.

"Now," said Tom, "you want to tiddivate a trifle, I know. Come up into my room; I'll show you the way."

"In the first place," said Maitland, addressing Georgiana, "allow me to deliver this into your hands;" and having presented Julia's letter with a smile, he followed Tom into his room.

"Now, then," said Tom, "here you are, you know. Here's combs and brushes, and razors and soap, and every other mortal thing which is. Don't be long."

"Oh, I shall not be three minutes! I merely want to wash my hands."

"Wouldn't you like a clean shirt now?—well aired?—warranted?"

"Oh, no; I shall do very well indeed."

"Well, you know, if you would, only say, and here you are."

"I shall do very well."

"Very good. Don't be long. We shall be in the parlour. We've got a spicy dinner, I know."

He then left him; and Maitland, in less than five minutes, followed him into the parlour.

"Upon my word, Colonel Cartwright," said Georgiana, archly, as he entered, "I really begin to think that you are a very dangerous person."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Maitland, with a smile.

"You really must not be allowed to win ladies' hearts in this way. Julia, I find, is quite in *love* with you! She speaks of you in a strain of rapture."

"Is it possible?" said Maitland, with an expression of intense earnestness.

"Possible?" echoed Georgiana. "Yes, sir, it is possible. I would show you her letter, but I dare not."

"If you will, I'll show you a note which *I* received from her."

"A note which *you* received from her! Upon my word!"

"It has reference to you."

"To me!"

"Yes; and if you'll show me yours, I'll show you mine."

"Well, I don't know; I don't think it *fair* exactly!—but I'll reflect upon the matter."

"Very good."

"I see how it is," cried Tom, "with half an eye. It's as right as a trivet betwixt 'em. Safe. Eh, governor?"

"Why," replied Todd, "it looks very like it, Tommy! It *does*!—*very* like it!—leastways I should *say* so; and, what's more, from all

I have heard o' the young lady, she's one which 'll answer his purpose."

"Safe!" cried Tom. "Eh?—won't she, George? Rayther."

"Now, don't appeal to me, dear," said Georgiana, playfully. "I can know nothing whatever about it."

"Can't you?" returned Tom. "I dare say you can't. Eh, governor? Rayther?"

Todd winked at Tom significantly, as Maitland and Georgiana smiled; but as dinner was announced at that moment, not another word was said upon the subject then.

During dinner, however, both Tom and his father rallied Maitland merrily, while Maitland, who knew that he had the cards in his hand, played them with great dexterity and care. His immediate object was to inspire Georgiana with the conviction that he loved Julia passionately, and this object he achieved with the most perfect success.

"You had better," she observed, when about to retire, "you had better let me take that note with me. I shall have time to study it when I'm alone, and then I can give you my *opinion*."

"Nay, that is *not* fair," replied Maitland; "unless, indeed, you promise to let me see yours."

"Well, I promise you this: that if I do not let you see the whole of it, I'll let you see those portions which have direct reference to you."

"That's quite sufficient!" cried Maitland, who gave her the note, and she withdrew.

"Now, then," said Tom, when Georgiana had retired, "I've a jovial good health to propose, and that's this: 'Here's health to an out-and-out young lady, which I know, and which nothing can ever cause me to be off respecting.' But for her, I do believe inwardly, that my George—which is one of the best and most popular creatures upon the face of the blessed earth—I say, but for her, I inwardly believe that my George and me would never have come together. If that was *all*, I couldn't be off respecting that young lady, which I'm now about to propose the good health of; but it ain't all, nor half all. I know her to be a trump—a regular out-and-out trump, and no *mistake*!—and what's more, as she's fell in love with one which has fell in love with her, and which is worthy of being fell in love with, and which is one of the best and most popular fellows going—which 'll make her such a husband as she ought to have, and which we respect as much as if he was a brother!—I say, as such is the case—as we respect 'em both for all the world like brother and sister—as we know they can't do better, and as my George and her 'll lay their horses' heads together as nice as ninepence and be friends for everlasting, and increase each other's mutual happiness—I say, that when we look at these things and take 'em all into account, I can't

do better—I don't want to do better—than give you, with all my heart and soul, the jovial good health of Miss Julia Storr."

"Bravo!" cried Todd; "very bravo, indeed! There, you see what a man does which speaks from the heart. That's the pint, Tommy—that's the grand pint. I've said so over and over and over again, and I know I'm right—I *know* it. Let a man speak from the heart, and he'll beat the Lord Chancellor of England. 'Here's the jovial good health of Miss Julia Storr.' God bless her! May she make a good wife—live long, and die happy. That's all the harm I wish her. Good health to Miss Storr."

"My friends," said Maitland, rising, "I will say my kind friends—for from you I have received far more kindness than friends in general display—I rise, with peculiar emotions, to return you my most sincere thanks for the compliment which you have paid *her*, whom, I now confess to you, I most fondly love. She is dear to me—*very* dear. I speak to you as men who have felt that which *I* feel, and who can therefore appreciate these feelings."

"Hear, hear!" exclaimed Todd, as tears sprang into his eyes.

"I thank you, from my heart," pursued Maitland. "If we ever *should* marry—"

"Safe!" cried Tom, "safe!"

"I hope so," added Maitland; "and if we *should*, the affection which exists between her and your amiable wife will have the effect of cementing *our* friendship, which I hope will last for ever."

"Capital!" exclaimed Tom. "Very good! Capital! Send I may live though, what sprees we shall have. I've got about a dozen slap places in my eye, where we can go and have pic-nics populor!"

"Well," said Todd, "times change and men change with 'em, but the stuff that fathers now-a-days are made of don't seem to be the same sort they were made of formerly. There used to be flesh and blood and feeling about 'em, but now they appear to be all selfish and snarling. I know what you mean, when you said just now, 'If we ever *should* marry,' as if you had a doubt about it: I know you meant you'd her father's opposition to get over. Why, what would he *have*? If he don't think *you* good enough for her, what sort of a man would he like her to have? One of the royal blood, and be blistered to him? It makes my blood bile when I hear of such ways. I've no patience with fathers which go on like that. However, it may be a flash in the pan, and I hope it'll prove so, with all my heart."

Georgiana's health was then proposed by Maitland: and Maitland's health was then proposed by Todd: and when Tom's health had been given and responded to, they rose and rejoined Georgiana.

"What do you say to a hand at cards?" cried Tom, immediately after coffee. "Governor, I'll give you a game at all-fours."



"With all my heart, Tommy," said Todd. "I'm agreeable. But what's the colonel and George to do?"

"Oh, *they'll* have a game at chess, of course. However they can sit poring over that board, puzzles *me*! However, they seem to like the game, and therefore it's nothing to us."

Tom then immediately got out the cards, and as he and his father commenced the game, Maitland and Georgiana sat down to chess.

"Now," said Georgiana, "before I make a move I must get you to explain to me what that was, which you directed to be enclosed in Julia's parcel. In her letter to me she simply states that she met you in a silk-mercier's shop."

"Exactly," said Maitland; "that was the day before—that was the first time we met. I'll explain: I had been looking at some gloves when I introduced myself, and when I had been talking to her for some time, and she had promised to write to you and to bring the letter to me on the morrow, I don't know how it was, but I quite forgot the gloves, and immediately quitted the shop."

"Very natural," said Georgiana, smiling. "Well?"

"What's that, George?" inquired Tom. "Eh?—What's that?—High, low, Jack, and game, you see."

"Not a bit of it," said Todd.

"Why, there you are!—twenty-four, and you're sixteen."

"That's right—I didn't see 'em."

"What's that he did, George?"

"Don't be inquisitive, dear," said Georgiana.

"Oh, but you may as well tell us, you know. Eh?—What did he do?"

"Why, when he saw Julia he was looking at some gloves, and, having spoken to her, he went away, and forgot all about them."

"Capital!" cried Tom, laughing heartily. "Come," he added, "no cheating, governor—no hanky-panky."

"What do you mean?" cried Todd. "That's fair enough. That's yours, and that's mine; isn't it?"

"Well," said Georgiana, addressing Maitland; "proceed."

"Well," pursued Maitland, "when we met the next day, I found that she had purchased the gloves for me!"

"Well, upon my word, Miss Julia!"

"Merely, I imagine, that it might not be supposed by the persons in attendance that I had forgotten them, that's all! But, no sooner had I received the gloves, than, begging of her to wait, I left the shop and ran to a jeweller's, where I purchased a ring, and, on my return, directed it to be placed in her parcel."

"*Very* fine, Colonel Cartwright. *Merely* in exchange for the gloves, of course. I understand. Well?"

"Well, it is *that* to which she alludes in her note, and you perceive that she is about to consult *you* on the subject. And now that I

have given you this candid explanation, I claim the performance of your promise to me."

"What, now? *Can* you not wait till to-morrow?"

"Will it be kind to make me wait? Will it indeed be fair?"

"Well, but you must not read it now. Take it with you, but be sure that you let me have it again to-morrow. And now, she added," having delivered the letter to him, "we will, if you please, commence the game."

They did so, but in less than five minutes Maitland quite unexpectedly found himself checkmated.

"You cannot play to-night!" said Georgiana, playfully.

"I didn't see that bishop," said Maitland.

"I'm aware of it: Julia was in your mind's eye. You'll not see it the next time."

"Try me."

"Here's the governor cheating like bricks!" cried Tom.

"What do you mean?" said Todd, "ain't that right?"

"Well, but haven't you done me out of four games?"

"Fairly."

"Well, cut away, now it's my deal."

They played again, and so did Maitland and Georgiana, but Maitland was again checkmated with ease, and shortly after that he and Todd left in the pony phaeton.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE RACE.

TOM and his friend were now almost inseparable. They were constantly together. Maitland's presence appeared to be absolutely essential to Tom's existence. If Maitland omitted to call at the Box, Tom was after him. There were, however, very few days on which he absented himself entirely; he called almost every morning, and invariably took the earliest opportunity of introducing the name of Julia, with whom Georgiana was now in constant communication.

"I have," said he, on one occasion, when Tom was absent from the room, "I have to solicit your opinion upon a subject of extreme delicacy."

"Indeed!" cried Georgiana with a smile.

"It is a subject," he continued, "which is nearest my heart; and upon which I feel that all my future happiness depends, and as I know that I can rely upon your judgment, and confide in your discretion, I am anxious to be guided entirely by you."

"Well," said Georgiana, "having paid me these compliments, perhaps you'll proceed to explain what this extremely delicate subject is?"

"The subject," returned Maitland, "has reference to Julia."

"And do you wish me to pass my opinion upon her?"

"No, that you have done already; my object is to ascertain whether, in your opinion, there would be any impropriety in my writing to her?"

"Why, I cannot see that in the mere fact of your writing to her there *would* be any absolute impropriety. Of course much would depend upon the style in which you write; and before I can form an opinion on the subject, I must know in what style you contemplate writing. Do you propose to write to her merely as to a friend whom you esteem, or one of whom you are passionately enamoured?"

"Why," replied Maitland, "to come to the point at once—that which I really propose is to send her a formal declaration."

"Oh!" exclaimed Georgiana, archly, "upon the propriety of your pursuing that course I can give no opinion."

"But how do you think that such a declaration would be *received*?"

"Well, upon my word, that is a question which requires consideration!"

"But without consideration, judging at once from your knowledge of her character and feelings—how do you *think* that it would be received?"

"Well, I must say, since you have pressed me so hard, that I do not think it would be received with *coldness*!"

"You do *not*!" cried Maitland.

"I certainly do not! But recollect, with reference to the *propriety* of the proceeding, I give no opinion."

"But you do not conceive that there *would* be any impropriety in it—any absolute impropriety?"

"I can conceive that there would be no impropriety in it whatever, if you had the colonel's consent!"

"Oh! but that can never be obtained."

"You have not yet *tried* to obtain it!"

"You have heard that he who has injured you, never forgives you?"

"That may be the rule; but he may be an exception!"

"Alas! I know him too well. Were he even to *suspect* my object, all would be lost."

"Well, I must, of course, leave it entirely in your hands, and I do so, with the expression of a most earnest hope that you and the colonel may eventually become reconciled."

Tom at this moment entered, and the subject was dropped; but a

declaration, written in a strain of rapture, was sent from Newmarket by that night's post.

The eve of the twentieth now arrived, and Maitland—of whom Tom had been in search all the morning—immediately after dinner rode over to the Box. As he dashed up the path Tom ran to the door, and with an expression of intense anxiety exclaimed, "What's the matter? What's the matter? You look excited. What's the matter? Is there anything amiss with The Machine? What's the matter?"

Maitland sprang from the saddle, and drawing Tom aside, said, "The horse is as well as ever: he can win, and *must* win—if he be allowed!"

"What, then; do you mean there's to be foul play?"

"The jockey has been bought. I am sure of it. I know it!"

"What!" cried Tom; "then we must hedge: we must hedge."

"Stop," said Maitland, "that may not be necessary."

"What, not necessary!"

"Is your father here?"

"Yes."

"Then I must speak to him on the subject."

"Speak to *him*! Why, I wouldn't have him know that I'm in for the world."

"That he need *not* know. I can tell him that *I'm* in, and ask his advice."

"Well," said Tom, "well. But I think we'd better hedge. However, we shall see. You'd better speak to him at once. *I* must not appear to be excited: if I do, he'll suspect all, safe. But send I may live, here's a kettle of fish! There, go into that room, and I'll bring him to you."

"Where's the colonel, Tommy?" inquired Todd, when Tom, with all possible calmness, returned.

"In the parlour," replied Tom; "he wants to speak to you."

"Why don't you bring him in?"

"He's got something to say to you in private."

"What's amiss, eh! Tommy? What's amiss? Do you know?"

"He's been betting some money about The Machine, and he wants your advice on the matter."

"There's suffen wrong," said Todd; "I know there's suffen wrong, Tommy, I *know* it. If there wasn't, he wouldn't want to speak to me in private."

"I hope he has not been betting to any *serious* amount?" said Georgiana.

"A pretty good sum, I believe," returned Tom.

"Dear me, I am sorry for that."

"Well," said Todd, "I'll go and see about it. You'd better stop here, Tommy."

"Oh, I'll go with you!"

"But if he wants to speak to me in private, you know, he don't want you there."

"Oh yes he does."

"Well, if so, come along."

They then entered the parlour, and Maitland, addressing Todd, said, "I want your advice."

"You shall have it," cried Todd; "the very best I can give you."

"I have," pursued Maitland, "been backing The Machine to the amount of five thousand—"

"Five thousand!" said Todd; "at what odds?"

"I have backed him at even?"

"Have you done nothing else?"

"I'm not interested in any other horse in the race."

Todd shook his head, and said, "Well?"

"Well, there's not a horse entered that stands the slightest chance with him."

"So I've understood; but there's always a risk."

"I'm aware of it; but I would run that risk willingly had I not reason to believe that the horse will not be suffered to win."

"What! Why, isn't it one of Lord Charles's?"

"It is."

"Then, make your mind easy on that point. *He'll* do nothing wrong. There isn't a more honourable man on the turf."

"I don't doubt *his* honour for a moment. But, to come to the point at once, I have been assured on good authority—I may almost say I *know*—that the jockey has been bought!"

"Who is he?"

"Frank—"

"Frank! Then I believe it—I believe it! I always suspected that man. But are you sure of it?"

"Quite."

"Can you prove it? That's the point!—Can you *prove* it?"

"I can prove that he has taken a bet to a large amount laid in favour of the horse."

"A bet, you mean, that *he'll* win if he makes the horse lose?"

"Of course."

"To what amount?—Do you know?"

"To the amount of several thousands."

"That's enough—*that's* enough. Will you leave this to me?"

"Most willingly."

"Very well! *I'll* cook his goose for him. I'll see Lord Charles this blessed night. I know him well, and he knows me—at least he used to do—and I can bring myself to his recollection. *I'll* hunt up!—I know where to find him. But, colonel, let me understand

you right, you know. This is a serious charge to bring against a man; because if it can be proved, he'll never, you know, be suffered to ride again; while if it can't, we shall only be getting ourselves into a mess! Now, am I to understand that you *can* prove it?"

"Certainly! I can prove that he has taken this bet; I can also prove, that the amount, if he should win it, is to be paid to a brother-in-law of his. I have no desire to make myself conspicuous, of course; but, if it should be necessary—that is to say, if he should afterwards attempt to make a stir in the matter—these facts *can* be proved beyond all dispute."

"That's enough!—that's enough—that's quite enough. You don't want your name to be mixed up with it unless he should kick. *I* see."

"But, don't you think," suggested Tom, "he'd better hedge?"

"That we shall see, Tommy—that we shall see."

"I'd rather stand if I were sure of fair play," said Maitland.

"Well, we shall know more about that by-and-by. When I've seen Lord Charles—and see him I will—I shall know better how to advise you to act. And now," he added, "keep up your spirits. *We'll* make it all right. We'll just have a glass of wine together, and then you and I'll be off."

"Well, but I shall go with you," said Tom.

"You can do no good by going."

"Perhaps not. But, of course, I should like to know how you get on?"

They then returned to the dining-room, and Georgiana anxiously inquired if that of which she had heard was likely to prove at all serious.

"Oh, no," replied Todd, "*we* shall get over it."

"You are a very naughty man to bet at all," said Georgiana, addressing Maitland; "a very naughty man."

"I think," said Maitland, smiling, "that I know a lady who has backed the same horse as that which *I* have backed."

"What, have you been betting too?" inquired Todd.

"Yes," replied Georgiana, "I have been wicked enough to bet with Tom."

"Ah, that's like your right hand betting with your left."

"She backed the Machine for a dozen of gloves," said Tom. "I don't know so much about her winning 'em now."

"She'll win 'em," said Todd. "But come, now let's be off." And when Tom had privately promised Georgiana that he would soon return, they started.

On reaching Newmarket, Todd proposed that they should go to his old house; and as this was, of course, agreed to, they went direct.

"Now," said he to Maitland, "you and Tom can remain here while I go and hunt up Lord Charles. Don't be impatient, because, you

know, nobs ain't comeatable always at the moment; but as soon as I've seen him, and heard what he says, I'll cut back as fast as I can."

He then left them, and went to the Rutland Arms, at which inn he felt sure that Lord Charles would put up; and having ascertained at once that his lordship was there, he wished the waiter to say that he was anxious to see him. To this the waiter demurred, on the ground that his lordship was engaged with a party of noblemen and gentlemen, whom he had had to dine with him that evening.

"But I wish," said Todd, "to see him on business of *great* importance. I'm sure he'll come out if you'll tell him that."

"Well, Mr. Todd," replied the waiter, "I'll *tell* him—certainly, to oblige you, I'll *tell* him—but I can't say I think it'll be of any use. Business of *great* importance, shall I say?"

"Yes, business of the utmost importance to himself."

"Very well," said the waiter; "I'll do the best I can." And he went up at once to Lord Charles.

"I'm engaged," said his lordship, when the message had been delivered; "I'm engaged."

"But, my lord," urged the waiter, "he says it is of the utmost importance to your lordship."

"Who is he? What is he?"

"He's a very respectable man, my lord: and I'm sure it's no trifling thing, my lord, which makes him so anxious to see your lordship now."

"Well; it's strange. Show him into the next room, and let me know when you have done so."

The waiter with pleasure returned to Todd, and having conducted him into a room, went at once to state the fact to his lordship, who, begging to be excused for one moment, left the party.

"Well," said Lord Charles, as he entered the room; "what's all this about?"

"I beg your lordship's pardon," replied Todd, humbly: "I wouldn't have disturbed your lordship, knowing you were engaged, if I hadn't had something of great importance to tell you."

"Well, what is it?"

"Your lordship's horse, The Machine, 'll run to-morrow; that horse my lord, I've no doubt can *win*; but as your lordship's in haste, I'll come to it at once—that horse *won't* win, if you let Frank ride him."

"Eh? What? Eh?"

"He'll not be *allowed* to win, my lord: he'll not be allowed to win."

"Why not?"

"Because if the horse does *not* come in first, Frank will win a very considerable sum of money."

"What, then, has he been betting *against* the horse?"

"He has, my lord, privately, to the amount of some thousands."

"Some thousands? Who are you?"

"My name, my lord, is Todd. Your lordship will recollect Tim, perhaps, who was with Sir Oswald Otway?"

"Tim! to be sure I do. I recollect you now. But this is a serious charge, you know."

"It is, my lord; but I can prove it."

"I hope that no personal pique has prompted you thus to come forward."

"Be assured, my lord, of that!"

"Then why have you interested yourself in the matter?"

"Because I've a friend, my lord—a bosom friend, I call him—which has backed the horse to the amount of five thousand. But if it hadn't been so—if I hadn't known a soul which had a shillin' on the race, I should have thought it my duty, as a hater of foul play, and more especially knowing your lordship, to expose it."

"Well, now there's *one* thing I have to beg of you, which is, that you'll not explain the object of this interview to any man alive."

"My lord, the friend which has backed the horse, and my son, are now waiting to know the result."

"Can you trust them?"

"With my life!"

"Then let it go no further. Tell your friend not to be alarmed. The horse can win and shall. Let me see you again in the morning."

"At what time, my lord?"

"Say ten."

"I'll be here. I hope your lordship now will pardon the liberty I took."

"Oh, I feel much *obliged* to you! You'll be here at ten?"

"I will, my lord: depend upon that."

He then respectfully took his leave, and returned in high spirits to Maitland and Tom.

"All right," he cried, as he entered the room. "All right—all *right*! I've seen Lord Charles, and told him all about it."

"Come," cried Tom, "that's glorious. But what did he say?"

"What? What did he say? Why, he said the horse can win, and *shall*! and then told me to see him again in the morning. But give us a glass of wine, Tommy, and then I'll tell you all, how, and about it."

He then proceeded minutely to explain to them all that had passed between him and Lord Charles; and so perfectly satisfied were they that the horse could and would win, that all idea of hedging was repudiated as absurd.

"He's safe not to let him ride now," said Tom. "If even the charge could *not* be proved he's safe not to let him ride now."



"I should say so," observed Todd, "but as it can be proved, I must pledge myself, if necessary, to prove it."

"That will be the better way," said Maitland; "because if that pledge be given all will be secure."

Feeling now perfectly convinced that the result would be favourable, they were all in high spirits; and when Tom, in no measured terms, had expressed his opinion of the conduct of the jockey, he left them, and returned to Georgiana.

In the morning, at ten o'clock precisely, Todd went up to see Lord Charles, and, on being ushered into his lordship's room, was received with all the courtesy which characterises a nobleman when he feels that you are doing him some essential service.

"Good morning," said his lordship, taking Todd by the hand. "Pray be seated."

Todd bowed with appropriate humility, and having seated himself, felt that the fact of his sitting in the presence of a "lord" was the commencement of a new era in his existence.

"Mr. Todd," pursued his lordship, "that which you told me last evening has been this morning partly confirmed; for I find that my horse—although as well as ever!—has gone back in the betting considerably."

"I'm very glad to hear it, my lord," said Todd. "I am *very* glad to hear it. I hope your lordship 'll make a little fortune by taking all the odds you can get."

"I *mean* to do so!" returned Lord Charles; "and make those who are in the supposed secret suffer. It is very clear to me that the bet of which you have spoken is not the only one which this scoundrel has made. He has set a man on to lay odds against the horse, and that man, I'm informed, is his brother-in-law."

"Why, that's the very man, my lord, to which this here bet's to be paid."

"I see. But this friend of yours, Mr. Todd: I have, perhaps, no right to ask who he is; but—"

"My lord. He's a gentleman, which is not of the common sort. He don't want, my lord, to make himself conspicuous. He don't want, you know, to come forrard, my lord, if it ain't right or necessary for him to come forrard. If it *is*, he's a man which won't flinch!—he's a man *which* 'll go through fire and water to do what's right, and to see what's right done. There's no mistake, my lord, *about* him! But I pledge *myself*—if your lordship means to bring it before the stewards—I pledge myself to prove the truth of all that I have told you."

"I am perfectly satisfied," returned Lord Charles. "I have been making inquiries since I saw you last evening, and I find that you are a highly respectable man."

"I've gone through life, my lord—I will say that—without wronging any mortal flesh of a penny."

"I am satisfied—perfectly satisfied—Todd; and therefore it is unnecessary for you to mention your friend's name."

"Perhaps you know him, my lord: there he is!" said Todd, as Tom passed in his curricule with Maitland.

"He who is driving?" inquired Lord Charles.

"No, my lord, not him; the t'other."

"Who is he that's driving?"

"My son," replied Todd, with a feeling of pride. "My son Tom."

"Indeed! Why, what is he?"

"A gentleman, living right up, my lord."

"Right up?"

"That is, living upon his property."

"Oh, I understand. Then you have realised a fortune?"

"I have, my lord; but my fortune isn't his'n. His fortune's his own—that is, it was his wife's."

"Why, whom did he marry?"

"The daughter of General Brooke, my lord."

"Is it possible! Oh, I find that when I'm speaking to you, Mr. Todd, I am speaking to no common man."

"I am very humble, my lord: I don't crack about myself."

"I like you all the better for it. I did think of rewarding you with a *purse*, for having given me this information; but I find that I must do it in some other way."

"I require no reward, my lord, at all."

"Well, that you must leave to me. You see, of course, the necessity for keeping this a secret?"

"Of course, my lord. It'll be kept as dark as twelve o'clock at night."

"Very good."

"Of course your lordship 'll not let Frank ride?"

"No, *no*, Todd; *no*."

"Because, if you do, my lord, my friend must hedge."

"Tell him, from me, not to hedge a shilling. If that be not sufficient, you may add, that I'll bet him five to four in ponies, hundreds, or thousands, as long as he likes."

"That's enough, my lord."

"You will see how I will serve that scoundrel by-and-by. He at present thinks that all is secure. He has no idea of my having the slightest suspicion. But you'll see, Todd; you'll see."

"Very good, my lord."

"And now," said Lord Charles, "I must go to the rooms. I expect to win more by *this* horse than I ever yet won in my life."

"I hope you *will*, my lord," returned Todd.

"If I do, you shall not be forgotten."

"Never mind me, my lord—never mind me! So long as *your* horse wins I don't care."

"And win he *will*," replied Lord Charles. "Bet all you like, and I'll stand all you lose."

"I shall bet nothing, my lord," replied Todd.

"Very well. Then I wish you good morning."

"Good morning, my lord," said Todd, bowing profoundly; and having accomplished this feat he withdrew, and went down to his house to meet Maitland and Tom.

"Is it all right?" cried Maitland, the moment he saw him.

"As right as the mail!" replied Todd.

"Frank is not to ride?"

"No!"

"Then it *is* all right. And now let them bet as they please."

"Lord Charles says don't hedge a single shilling."

"I'll *not*—I'll stand as I am, win or lose!"

"And now, Tommy," said Todd, "cut off home for Georgiana. It's eleven now, and the race begins at one."

"Lots of time," replied Tom; "lots of time!"

"Never mind, Tommy, do you go and fetch her."

"Very *well*! But where are we to meet?"

"At the Devil's Dyke, Tommy, there, just by the gate. I shall have sullen nice."

"All right," cried Tom, who left them at once, and having entered his curricule, dashed through the town.

Todd then gave a lecture to Maitland on betting, and when he had said all he wished to say they drove to the "Devil's Dyke."

"Now then," said Todd, on their arrival, "we'll get the hamper out and lay the cloth.—Here they are!" he added, as the curricule approached. "Now we've got half an hour good, at least."

Sandwiches, pies, sausage-rolls, and champagne, appeared on the cloth in an instant, and when they had done full "justice to all," they proceeded at once to the weighing stand.

The very first person whom they recognised here was Lord Charles, who, mounted on a powerful horse, had a heavy hunting whip in his hand. As they passed, his lordship saw and bowed to Todd, who pulled up and remained within twenty yards of him, until they saw Frank approach the stand on his pony, when, at Maitland's suggestion, he pulled near the ropes.

"Frank," said Lord Charles, when the jockey had dismounted for the purpose of weighing, "stop! pull off my colours!"

"My lord?" cried Frank, turning on the instant pale as death.

"Take off my jacket and cap," said his lordship.

"Why, my lord?"

"Sam is to ride The Machine."

"My lord?"

"Do you hear me? Take off my colours."

"Well!" said Frank, as he gave the cap and jacket to Sam, "perhaps your lordship will tell me *why* I am not to have the mount?"

"My horse is to *lose*, is he?" cried Lord Charles, lashing Frank violently,—"he is to lose!"

"My lord!" cried Frank, in agony.

"Scoundrel!" exclaimed Lord Charles, as he lashed him with his whip with increased violence, "scoundrel!—villain;—ungrateful *dog*."

"My lord!—my lord!—my *lord*!" cried Frank.

"You'd sell me, villain!" exclaimed Lord Charles, applying his whip with all possible vehemence. "You'd sell me, would you!—*sell* me!"

Frank, unable to get away, caught the bridle of his lordship's horse, but Lord Charles, raising the handle of his whip, immediately struck him to the ground.

"Murder! murder! murder!" cried Frank; but Lord Charles lashed him still, and continued to lash him with all the violence at his command, until he fell down and absolutely groaned.

His lordship was then surrounded by his friends, to whom he was about to explain *why* he had inflicted this chastisement, when loud cries of "They're off! they're off!" drew them to the ropes.

"*Here* they come!—here they are!—*Now* for the sell!" cried Tom. "The Machine, for a million! Go it!—go it!—bravo!—now then!—put him ahead!—cut away!—spur, you devil, *spur*, I tell you!—now then!—*Hooray*! They're done like a dinner!"

The Flying Machine had won by a length, and Tom sank back exhausted.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

### FRANK'S CONDITION.

IMMEDIATELY after the race, the general, seeing Maitland alone, rode up, and with an expression of anger, exclaimed, "How's this?"

"Unfortunate," replied Maitland—"very unfortunate."

"Unfortunate! He made every effort to win!"

"Frank was not on the horse."

"He was not?"

"Didn't you see what occurred before the race?—didn't you see Lord Charles lashing him?"

"No!"

"He lashed him with a heavy hunting-whip until he was utterly unable to stand. He had evidently found out that something was wrong."

"Of course!" cried the general, with a sneer: "of course!—and that through your *honourable* instrumentality."

"General Brook," said Maitland, "I treat the insinuation with contempt! I'll say nothing having reference to my honour; but I'll put it to you, whether it is probable or even conceivable that I should make the thing known, and thus sacrifice five thousand pounds?"

"By whom else could it have been made known? Is it likely that *he* would do it?"

"No: not at all. But it might have been discovered through his indiscretion."

"*Might* have been?"

"Yes! and was! I've just heard that he was fool enough to commission that brother-in-law of his to lay odds against the horse! Of course that created suspicion, and Lord Charles upon that suspicion proceeded."

"Then am I to understand that Lord Charles knows nothing about *my* bet with this infernal fellow?"

"It is, of course, impossible for me to tell, but I should say that he does not."

"It must all come out now, I *suppose*?"

"I see no absolute necessity for its being known at all! Frank would indeed be a fool to confess it, while *you*, of course, can keep your own counsel!"

"Yes! And lose, of course, ten thousand pounds. Maitland, I am not at all satisfied!"

"I'm not surprised at that: I should indeed wonder if you were!"

"I am not at all satisfied that I have not been duped by you and your low-bred friend."

"General Brooke! what do you mean?"

"I mean that I have a strong suspicion that you have conspired with him—"

"With whom?"

"With whom! Why, with that vulgar scamp, your friend *Todd*!"

"General Brooke: I shall not take much trouble to convince you that you are wrong; I'll merely declare to you most solemnly, that he knows no more about your being concerned in this bet than a child. If you feel disposed to argue the thing calmly, I am willing

to go into it with you; if *not*, why it is to me a matter of no importance. The facts, I think, speak for themselves. If the horse had lost, I should have gained five thousand pounds. Can any man believe that I would sacrifice that sum? Frank would also have gained five thousand. Can any man imagine that he would have lost that and his reputation willingly? As to the other, I repeat that up to this moment he knows nothing whatever of your connexion with the bet which he took of your agent; nor need he ever know; and therefore if, with these facts before you, you can feel yourself justified in harbouring any such suspicion as that to which you have alluded, all I can say is, that you, in my opinion, are the only man living that can."

"Well, I tell you candidly, that I don't feel satisfied. Will you, however, let me see you in the morning?"

"Certainly!—at what time you please."

"Shall we say ten?"

"Ten will suit me."

"At the Rutland Arms."

"I'll be there."

"Very well," said the general, who rode slowly off as Maitland returned to his party.

"I say," cried Tom, "what's the row? The general seems excited! Anything broke?"

"He has lost on the race," replied Maitland: "that's all!"

"I didn't know he ever betted!"

"Nor did I," interposed Georgiana; "I hope that the sum he has lost is not large?"

"Oh! no," replied Maitland; "a trifle to *him*. But no man of course likes to lose."

"That's right," said Tom: "rather: leastways *I* never met with a man which did. But I say though, wasn't it a capital race? Didn't The Machine go along at the finish? But send I may live, if I didn't think at one time the Pet would have collared him just before the close. It wasn't at all the dead beat I expected. It wasn't so *safe*, mind you!—*nor* nothing like it."

"The Pet ran beautifully," said Maitland.

"I believe you!" cried Tom. "If they were to run again to-morrow, it wouldn't be six to four: that's my notion of the matter."

Todd, who had anxiously kept near Lord Charles, now approached, in a state of intense perspiration. "Tommy," said he, "open a bottle o' champagne."

"All right," cried Tom, "eh? A beautiful race, wasn't it?"

"Too near to be pleasant!—too near to be pleasant, Tommy!—Don't say another word about it just yet. Now then, Tommy, give us a glass: I feel fit to drop."

A bottle of champagne was immediately opened, and when Todd had drunk off a couple of glasses he felt considerably better.

"Now then," said he, addressing Maitland: "I've just got *one* thing to say to you, and that's this: You've had a lesson. Let it last you your life. Don't bet any more for no mortal flesh. You've done the trick this time: let that be enough. Don't try it on again: that's all: don't try it on again."

"I've had quite sufficient of it," said Maitland.

"That's right: stick to that, and you'll do. You see there's no safety—not a dust: there ain't half a mite of security for either man or beast. And now, Tommy, let's cut back to the Box."

"Won't you stop for the other races?" cried Tom.

"No: I've had enough for once. I've no taste for any more racing to day."

"Well, I can't say that *I* care a great deal about it."

"What do you say, my dear?" inquired Todd of Georgiana.

"I am in your hands," she replied: "I have no great desire to remain."

"Well, then, let's be off at once: shall we, colonel?"

"With all my heart," replied Maitland.

"And then," added Todd, "we shall have time to breathe before dinner, and talk the matter over again calm, that I think will be about it. Eh, Tommy?"

"Exact. The colonel's won his bet and George's won hers, and as hers was a regular do, I shall cut it at once in a state of disgust."

They then left the heath and returned to the Box, with feelings which could scarcely be called pleasurable, seeing that they were tinged with the effects of recent apprehension. Maitland seemed less inclined to be gay than the rest, for he had latent reasons for being apprehensive still. He was remarkably silent: he listened attentively to all they had to say on the subject, but could scarcely be said to have joined in the conversation at all.

"Why," said Tom, when they had dined, and Georgiana was about to withdraw, "if I didn't know the regular true state of the case, I should say you'd lost all the money you bet and couldn't pay it! I never see a winner look so down in the mouth yet. I've seen a loser pull a long face if you like; but the notion of a winner pulling such an unpopular phiz, you know, is what I call rum."

"You don't understand it," said Todd: "not a mite. You're wide awake, Tommy, sometimes, I know; but you don't at all understand this. There's feelin's, Tommy, of every sort, and a man of feelin' feels 'em most."

"D'you mean to say, then, that I ain't a man of feeling?"

"That ain't the pint, Tommy: not a bit of it!—no, that ain't the pint; the pint's this: there's feelin's which springs from pleasure, and feelin's which springs from pain, but there's other feelin's which

springs from both, and which is like bitin' a bit of horehound, Tommy: you find it sweet o' one side and bitter o' the t'other. That's the pint. The colonel's thinkin' of the risk he ran! That's the *bitter*, the taste of which, the sweets o' winnin', ain't yet destroyed."

"You are about right," said Maitland.

"I know I'm right: I *know* it!—flesh can't on that pint deceive me."

"And now," added Maitland, "I must beg of you to excuse me."

"But send I may live!" cried Tom: "you're not going to leave us yet!"

"I have this evening to call upon a person whom I am most anxious to see."

"I understand," observed Todd: "I understand. I hope he's a good man: I hope he's responsible—one which'll shell out on settling day safe."

"Oh, it is not the person with whom I've been betting! He is as safe as the bank."

"I'm glad to hear it."

"This person is a friend of mine."

"Oh, I beg pardon!"

"I have a little business to transact with him."

"Well, business is business. I hope it isn't bettin' business: that's all *I* hope."

"You may depend upon this," returned Maitland, "that I shall never bet to any extent again."

He then rose, and having promised to see them early in the morning, mounted one of Tom's horses and left, with the view of calling at once upon Frank.

It may here be explained that immediately after that respectable jockey had been so deservedly lashed by Lord Charles, he was placed in a chaise and driven home, writhing with agony; that so excruciating was the pain he endured, that a surgeon was immediately sent for, who directed the attendants to assist him into bed; and that, notwithstanding every effort was made with a view to his relief, he remained in a fainting state for nearly three hours.

When, therefore, Maitland called at his lodgings, and had—by virtue of sending up his card—gained admission to his bedroom, he found him moaning piteously.

"Oh, Frank, Frank," said he: "this is a bad job, Frank: a very bad job."

"It is a bad job," replied Frank: "it is a bad job, indeed."

"Are you in much pain now?"

"Oh, in torture!"

"Why did you not run when he began it?"

"Run! How could I run? What was the use of my attempting to run? I couldn't run so fast as his horse!"



"You might at once have mingled with the crowd. You were near it. He couldn't, of course, have done much to you then!"

"That's true: *that's* true: I didn't think of that at the moment. But how people could stand by and see a man cut about as I was without interfering, and that, too, without at all knowing the cause, staggers *me*! Well, well," he added, mournfully, "it can't be helped now; but that idiot ought to be shot!"

"What idiot?"

"That fool of a brother-in-law of mine! It was all through him."

"It was!"

"Yes: no sooner did *he* know what was to occur than he must go and lay odds against the horse, as if he wished to open everybody's eyes."

"This clears up the mystery. I *thought*, when I heard that odds had been offered, that *you* would never be so consummate an ass as to commission him or any other man, under the circumstances, to offer them!"

"Not I, indeed! What I said to him was this: the horse has been made safe, get all the odds upon him you can, and I'll let you have the money to stake, if required. Instead of which, he, like a fool, offered six to four against him, and thus at once blew up the whole affair!"

"Well, it's a sad thing, that's certain. It's of no use my saying that I wish you had been satisfied with the five thousand bet—"

"I wish I had; but who'd have thought he *could* have been such a fool? I suppose that you are in for it nicely?"

"Why, as I hinted to you, I stood to win five thousand!"

"Ah! Well, *I* couldn't help it. It wasn't *my* fault. *I'm* well in for it, that's quite clear."

"What do you think then will be the result?"

"Why, the result, as far as I am concerned, will be ruin. I shall never be suffered to ride again."

"Never?"

"Never! I shall be warned off every course in England."

"Will they carry it to that extent?"

"Safe! The stewards will go into it you'll find, and there's not a more despotic set in the world."

"But what can they prove? Can they prove that you bet against the horse?"

"They can have proof sufficient for them. It isn't as if I could put a bold face upon the matter, and say now I defy you to prove it. Depend upon it, Lord Charles had proof enough, or he wouldn't have acted as he did."

"But as far as the bet with the general is concerned, they, of course, can know nothing of that?"

"Perhaps not; perhaps they never will, unless they can wind

round that fool to whom the money was to be paid. Is the general *very* rich?"

"Very."

"Then," said Frank, musingly, "I hope they never will."

He then reverted to the unmerciful flogging he had received, and when he had minutely explained the anguish he had endured, Maitland promised to see him again on the morrow, and left him with the perfect conviction that no suspicion whatever attached to him.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

### SETTLING DAY.

IN the morning, at ten o'clock precisely, Maitland met the general at the Rutland Arms, and, after exchanging a few preliminary observations, they sat down, and proceeded to business at once.

"Well," said the general, "have you heard any more of this affair?"

"Yes," replied Maitland; "it forms the chief topic of conversation."

"Have you heard my name mentioned in connexion with it?"

"No!—nor do I believe that it is known to any man living, with the exception of Frank and myself. By the way, I called upon Frank last evening, and found him half dead."

"Had you found him quite dead I should have liked it all the better. What did he say?"

"He spoke of the affair generally, ascribed the discovery to the foolish bets made by his brother-in-law, and, of course, dwelt in a sorrowful strain upon the fact of his being ruined for life."

"I suppose his career as a *jockey* is at an end?"

"He'll never be suffered to ride again."

"Well!—he cannot blame me for that. I, of course, had nothing to do with the discovery."

"He blames no one but his brother-in-law."

"Well! Now, Maitland, let us at once come to the point. I have lost this ten thousand pounds; and the loss, of *itself*, does not gall me; but the thought of its going to that low-bred dog, and thus increasing his importance, poisons every feeling I possess. Now, am I compelled to pay this money?"

"Why," replied Maitland, "legally you are not; but you are in honour *bound* to do so."

"I'd rather," rejoined the general, with an expression of great significance—"I'd rather divide it between you and the jockey."

"You offer me a great temptation to say 'Then do so.' But if I had to give you my advice, without reference to my own interest, I should say, pay the money at once and have done with it. See how your refusal to pay would involve you! Your agent is a well-known, responsible man; and, as you induced him to make the bet nominally on his *own* account, is it at all likely that he would allow himself to be stigmatised as a defaulter, without publishing the real state of the case to the world? He would do so most certainly, and the result would be, of course, the everlasting destruction of your reputation as a man of honour."

"You are right," said the general. "I perceive that you are right. He would, of course, investigate the matter, and that investigation might lead to the discovery of the whole affair. You are quite right. The money must be paid, but I wish it were ten thousand drops of poison! And now, as regards yourself, this affair has been to you all trouble and no profit."

"Leave that to me," said Maitland; "leave that to me. He'll not have the money long. Of that you may rest assured. I'll have some of it before he's much older. I've nursed pretty well. I've no reason to complain."

"I suppose there's no chance of the jockey revealing the secret?"

"What, Frank! Not the slightest. He told me last evening distinctly that he hoped it might never be known."

"Very good. And now, when ought this money to be paid?"

"Why, it ought to be paid to-day. Your agent, I have no doubt, expects to receive it before twelve o'clock."

"Oh, then I may as well go at once and see him. If you should hear my name mentioned in connexion with this affair, perhaps you will take the earliest opportunity of letting me know?"

"I will. But I have no apprehension on that point. I see no necessity for your name being mentioned."

"Well, then, I'll settle at once and have done with it. When shall I see you again?"

"When you please."

"I shall be here to-morrow at twelve."

"Then I'll give a look in at that time."

"Very well; then I now leave that wretch in your hands, Maitland; *work* him!—work him *well*!—if you don't, you're a fool!"

"Leave it to me!" replied Maitland—"leave all that to me." And having taken the general's proffered hand, he returned to the White Hart, ordered Tom's horse to be immediately saddled, and proceeded at once to the Box.

"Now, then," said he, on his arrival, "I want you to go with me and receive that money."

"Will it be paid to-day?" inquired Tom.

"Yes; and therefore we'd better receive it at once."

"Oh, let's wait an hour or two longer, you know!—That swell may think we want the money very bad indeed."

"Punctuality is always expected. Besides, delays in money matters are dangerous; therefore let us go at once."

"Well, if you wish it, I will! But, send I may live, you know, he'll think we're down upon him rather *too* punctual."

"No; not at all. He expects us. I have not the slightest doubt that he is waiting for us now."

"Oh, well then, if that's it, he shan't wait long. We'll just have a glass of wine together, you know, populo, and then we'll cut off. Just ring the bell, will you, while I get out the sherry?"

Maitland rang the bell, and when the servant appeared, Tom desired him to tell one of the grooms to saddle the bay.

"Now, you know," he added, "George 'll be down in about a minute; but mum's the word, you know!—not a breath. I wouldn't let either her or the governor know it for double the money, so be on your guard."

"All right," returned Maitland; "depend upon—"

"Hush! Here she comes."

Georgiana now entered the room, and having shaken hands with Maitland, expressed a hope that he was in somewhat better spirits than he appeared to be in when he left them the preceding evening.

"I am," replied Maitland, with a smile; "but I have to apologise for being low spirited while in the presence of—I could say whom!"

"He means you, of course!" cried Tom; "safe! But I say! don't you know—can't you guess—why he's in good spirits now? Because if you can't, I can tell you, and *no* mistake. The fact is, you know, he gets the mopuses to-day, and wants me to go and help him to receive 'em. He can't, you know, trust himself alone: that's it: ain't it now, colonel?—now come, speak the truth. Eh? Ain't that about it?"

"Have it your own way," replied Maitland, "I'm content. But if," he added, turning to Georgiana, "if you will not scold me for taking him with me—"

"Be assured of this, colonel," said Georgiana, archly, "I shall scold you well, if you ever again run such a desperate risk. I'll moreover let Julia know of it!"

"Let me be forgiven this time," returned Maitland, "and I pledge you my honour that I'll never, never do it again."

"Very well," said Georgiana; "then consider yourself forgiven."

"Now then," cried Tom, "just wet the other eye, you know, and then we'll be off. Here you are! We shall be back about five," he added, turning to Georgiana.

"I'll promise to come back," said Maitland, "one one condition only, which is, that you'll do me the honour to dine with me to-morrow."

"Very well then, we will," returned Tom, "and no mistake at all about it: eh, George?"

"I shall be, of course, most happy—"

"Of course, so that's settled: and now then, my boy, come along."

They accordingly left Georgiana, and mounted; but Maitland even then did not feel quite secure; indeed, his career had been marked by so many disappointments, that he really felt nothing in the shape of money secure until he absolutely held it in his hand. This feeling of insecurity, however, he managed to conceal: still, the very moment they had dismounted, on reaching the White Hart, he hurried Tom into the coffee-room yard, where, in the midst of a crowd of betting men, they saw the general's agent, who recognised them at once, and on referring to his book, said, with the most perfect coolness, "Let's see. Ah: ten thousand."

"Yes," said Tom, "that's about it."

"Very good," added the gent, as he pulled out a large roll of notes, "ten: that you'll find right."

Tom counted the notes, and found ten, each for one thousand.

"Do you want a receipt?" he inquired.

"A receipt!" said the agent, with a smile, "no, we neither give nor take receipts here."

"Well, I didn't know," said Tom; "I thought, perhaps, you'd just like to have my fist in your book."

"Not at all! We are, or profess to be at least, men of honour."

"All right! But I say, I wish you'd come and have a glass of champagne with us, will you?"

"I haven't time," replied the agent; who immediately turned to settle with another who approached him.

"Well!" said Tom, as he passed through the crowd, "he's about the coolest hand I ever *did* see!"

"Keep your hand in your pocket," whispered Maitland.

"All right!" replied Tom; "but send I may live! Did you *ever* see a fellow pay ten thousand pounds away like that before, in all your born days? Did you ever?"

"I certainly never did," returned Maitland; who anxiously hurried him into the White Hart, and proceeded at once to his own private room.

"Now then," said Tom, as he drew forth the notes: here you are: let's divide 'em at once: there's your five, and I wish you luck with 'em. And now," he added, as Maitland eagerly took up his share, "as all this has been entirely through you, I shall tell you what I'll do with you; I'll make you a present of the spiciest horse I can meet with either in or out of Newmarket."

"Nay, nay," said Maitland: "I do not wish for that."

"But you shall have it! And it *shall* be a good 'un. And now let's have a glass of champagne upon the strength of it."

"With all my heart!" cried Maitland, who with alacrity rang the bell. "And now," he added, "I've one great favour to ask of you."

"What's that?"

"It is that you will allow me to make your amiable wife a present."

"Not a bit of it! Nothing of the sort! Not a ha'porth of anything in life! There's no occasion for it!—not a single mite in the world."

"I have received much kindness both from her and you: and as I have now a plea for acknowledging that kindness, I hope to be allowed by you to do so."

"Stuff and nonsense about kindness. There's been just as much on one side as the other."

"I cannot on that point agree with you, and therefore I hope—"

"Well, do as you like: only don't run yourself to any unpopular expense: that's all *I've* got to say to you. Do as you like, and then, perhaps, your mind'll be easy."

That Maitland's mind was not easy then, is a fact which, under the circumstances, will not appear strange. The absolute possession of five thousand pounds was to him the source of the most intense excitement. He ordered lunch, and tried to eat, but could not: he endeavoured to appear calm while Tom was eating, but could not: he tried by all the means at his command to string his nerves, and keep his hands from trembling, but could not. The excitement was peculiar, and in itself pleasing; but although his object was to subdue it then, he found that that object was not to be achieved.

"Come," cried Tom, at length, "walk in! You don't peck. What's the row? Send I may live, you eat nothing."

"I really have no appetite," said Maitland."

"Then just shake this slice of broiled ham by the collar: that'll give you an appetite, safe!—it's capital."

Maitland, however, could do nothing with it: he now and then took half a glass of champagne, while Tom was making a hearty meal, and that he discovered was all that he could do.

"Now," said Tom, when he had finished the ham, "what's the next move on the board?"

"I wish you'd excuse me five minutes?" said Maitland.

"Of course! Cut away. You've no call to tiddivate much. Don't be long."

"I'll not be five minutes," said Maitland, who retired at once to his bedroom, with a view of deciding upon what he should do with his money.

"If I place it in the bank here," thought he, "it may fail! If I carry it about with me, I may be robbed! If I lock it up in one of my trunks, I may find the house in flames on my return! How am I to make it secure?"

This question puzzled him for more than five minutes; but at length

he rang the bell, and having procured a needle and thread of the chambermaid, he sewed the notes securely between the satin and the lining of the waistcoat he wore, and taking from his trunk a pair of small pocket pistols, he loaded them well, and returned to Tom.

"Now," said he, as he entered the room, "I'm at your service."

"All right!" cried Tom. "What shall we do? Shall we call upon the governor and see if he's gone?"

"Yes: I think we had better do so."

"Very well; then come along. I've ordered the horses. Let's cut it at once."

They then proceeded to Todd's new residence—a neat little cottage just out of the town—and as they found that he had left home an hour before, they went on at once towards the Box.

"How do you manage?" inquired Maitland, on the road. "Where do you place your money for security?"

"In the Funds," replied Tom. "It's safe enough there. But what I'm to do with what I've about me now I've no notion. I can't place that there, because the governor's safe to know it, as he manages all my money affairs."

"Indeed. Suppose The Machine had lost, how would you have got on then?"

"Why then, you know, of course he must have known it, and a pretty kick up there'd have been. But, of course, I made quite sure of winning. I didn't suppose there was half a chance for any other horse in the race. It was, however, a near touch—so near, that I'll never try the dodge on again. That makes me so anxious to keep the thing from him, and that's why I can't put this money in the Funds. I must hide it up somewhere, I suppose, and keep it by me."

"How do you manage to place money in the Funds?"

"Oh, that's very soon done. You go to a swell, which they call a 'broker'—not one of them which buys up old furniture, but one which lives in a little poking hole called an office, in which there's no furniture at all—well, you go to him and tell him what you want, and he does the job for you in no time."

"In London, you mean?"

"Of course."

"I see."

"But how do you manage? What do you do with all *your* money?"

"Why," replied Maitland, "I have hitherto thought that a man could not invest his capital more profitably or more securely than in land!"

"That's just my sentiments," said Tom. "I've told the governor so over and over again. I should like to buy a farm, you know, of three or four hundred acres. What does land in general bring in?"

"That depends upon circumstances entirely," replied Maitland, who saw the necessity for being cautious. "Some soils are heavy and some are light, and some are neither light nor heavy. It all depends upon circumstances, of course."

"Of course!" echoed Tom. "Of course!"

They now entered the gate, and as they rode up the path, Todd came out to meet them, and cried, "*All right?*"

"All right," replied Maitland.

"But have you got the mopuses?"

"Yes."

"That's a blessin'. I was half afraid you hadn't! 'cause I know, you see, what slippery swells some of 'em are. Then he paid you at once?"

"Like a brick," said Tom; "and made no bones about it."

"Well, come in, and let's have a glass of wine together: my mind's now as easy as a glove."

They accordingly followed him into the parlour, in which they sat and conversed until dinner-time, when Georgiana entered and congratulated Maitland on the successful issue of his "desperate speculation."

During dinner they were all in high spirits. Maitland himself was exceedingly gay; but having made up his mind to call again upon Frank, he left early on the plea of having to transact business of importance that evening.

Frank was better, much better, but still in great pain, and when Maitland called he found him leaning back in an easy-chair.

"Well, how are you now?" inquired Maitland.

"Sore," replied Frank: "very sore: sore all over."

"No doubt. But you'll soon be all right again now."

"Yes, I hope to be able to get about a little, soon. Have you seen the general?"

"Yes: I saw him this morning."

"Well, what does he say?"

"Why, of course he is sorry for what has occurred, and has reason to be sorry, having lost to a very considerable amount."

"He can afford it, I suppose?"

"Why yes, he can afford it."

"He's *very* rich, I think you said?"

"He *is* rich: I call a man possessing what he possesses, *very* rich."

"Yes. Well, now, what would you advise me to do? He, of course, lays no blame upon me?"

"None whatever."

"Very good. Then how would you advise me to act? You know, of course, how I am circumstanced, and what I have now to expect. Would you advise me to see him and state my case to him, and try to draw something out of him, or not?"



"Why, I certainly should advise you by all means to do so. It can do no harm, and it may do you good."

"I meant to do so if even you opposed it: but I was anxious to hear what objection could be raised."

"I can see no objection whatever. On the contrary, I conceive it to be the most advisable course you can pursue. I think that you ought to see him in justice to yourself: feeling certain that if you do but go the right way to work you'll get him to stand something handsome."

"Well," said Frank, "I'm glad you agree with me in that. But which do you think the right way to go to work?"

"Why, to see and speak to him calmly. If you attempt to bully him you'll spoil all: for he's not the kind of man to be bullied."

"I shall not attempt anything of that sort, that you may take your oath of. But how am I to see him?"

"I have to be with him at the Rutland Arms to-morrow at twelve, and if you feel disposed to take my advice, you'll meet him as if by accident on the road."

"What, as he's coming?"

"Yes."

"I'll do so."

"Start from here about half-past eleven. He's a punctual man; you are certain to meet him. But, of course, not a word about your having been advised to adopt this proceeding by me."

"Of course not; you know nothing of it."

"Very good."

"What sum would you advise me to name?"

"That I must leave to you entirely! Make the best bargain you can. I'd neither ask more than I thought he'd give, nor less than I thought I would get. You'll see. You can sound him. When you feel his pulse you'll know better how to proceed."

"Very well; then if I can crawl out to-morrow at all, I'll meet him on the road."

"You have had no communication, I suppose, from Lord Charles?"

"Not directly; but I've heard he's *determined* to bring the case before the stewards."

"Well, I am very sorry for it. Let's hope for the best. They may be able to *prove* nothing after all!"

Frank shook his head, and again expressed his fears, and shortly afterwards Maitland rose and left him.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

## THE NEGOTIATION.

IN the morning, precisely at half-past eleven, Frank, with difficulty, crept into a low pony-chaise, and, being muffled up, drove through the town unknown. He passed an unusual number of persons whom he knew, and who looked as if they thought they had seen the pony before; but they all failed to recognise him.

Having reached the end of the Soham-road, he somewhat slackened the pony's pace, and before he arrived at the second milestone he saw the general approaching.

"Now, Frank," said he to himself, confidentially, "mind what you're after. Stick to him!—but be calm. He's a nob, you know, that don't want to be exposed, and that's the sore place you must touch him upon."

He drove on, apparently taking no notice, until he and the general were side by side, when he pulled up suddenly, and, touching his hat, said, "I beg pardon, General Brooke; my name's Frank."

"Oh!—Ah—yes, exactly," cried the general. "I didn't know you! Well, Frank: this has been a very bad job."

"It has been, indeed, a bad job for *me*."

"And for me, too. I've lost an immense deal of money."

"Ah, you can afford it, general; but I am completely ruined."

"How do you account, Frank—tell me candidly—how do you account for the fact of it's being discovered?"

"It was all through my fool of a brother-in-law. He must go and lay odds against the horse as soon as he knew how matters stood."

"You should have chosen a somewhat more discreet person, Frank."

"I thought I might have trusted my *life* in his hands."

"Well! it's a most unfortunate affair. But it can't be helped now. We must make the best we can of it. It can't be helped now."

"I am aware that it can't be helped, General Brooke, but I hope *you'll* not slight me!"

"Slight you, Frank! No, most certainly not. I wish you every possible success."

"But this affair has utterly ruined me!"

"Not utterly, Frank; not utterly."

"Yes, general, utterly! I shall never be suffered to ride again; I shall be warned off every course in England."

"Well, Frank, all you have to do is to make the best of it, and turn your hand at once to something else."

"But what else *can* I turn my hand to?"

"Oh, I'll undertake to get you a good situation."

"As what?"

"Oh, as groom!"

"As groom!" cried Frank, whose blood began to boil.

"Ay, of course, you know all about the management of horses. I'll even make room for you in my own stables."

"I'd see your stables in *flames*," cried Frank, "before I'd humble myself so low."

"Well, Frank, well," said the general: "well. As you said that you were utterly ruined, I thought that a place of that kind might *suit* you!"

"Suit me! no, no, General Brooke; such a place as that would *not* suit me."

"Well, Frank, all I have to say is, I hope you'll get into something better."

"And is that *all* you have to say?" inquired Frank, as he perceived that the general was about to leave him.

"What more can I say?" returned the general. "I wish you well; and if at any time you need my assistance you shall have it."

"I need it now, General Brooke," said Frank: "and must have it; if not, the whole truth must be told."

"What d'you mean—what d'you mean?"

"You tempted me, sir, to do that which I have done, and which, but for you, I should never have thought of: you have thus been the cause—the first cause—of my ruin, and unless I have some compensation from *you*, be assured that I will not suffer alone."

"Well, well, well: say no more about it. Let me know where you live, and I'll send you a cheque."

"For what amount?"

"Oh, I'll say fifty pounds: there, I'll send you a cheque for fifty pounds."

"Fifty pounds," replied Frank, "will be of no use to *me*."

"Will a *hundred* satisfy you then?"

"No, nor *five* hundred! I must have a thousand!"

"What!"

"A thousand!"

"Then, sir, you'll not have it of *me*!"

"Very well. To-morrow the whole case comes before the stewards. I shall attend, of course: and he who tempted me shall not come off harmless. I'll expose the whole affair from first to last, and your name will be published to the world as that of a blackleg—"

"Scoundrel!" cried the general, fiercely; "what do you *mean* by using language of that character to me!"

"If I *am* a scoundrel, you made me what I am."

"I am not to be moved by threats!"

"Nor have I any wish to use them: I merely wish to let you know how I mean to act in the event of your refusing to do what's right."

"Refuse to do what's right! Pooh! Give you a thousand pounds for employing a fool! I'll do no such a thing. Therefore, act as you please, and say what you please."

"I have proofs, you'll recollect! I have your handwriting—"

"I care not for that: make what use you can of it. Had you demanded anything in reason you should have had it; but the idea of demanding a thousand pounds is monstrous!"

"Well, sir, you know best, of course, what your character's worth. I shall do nothing in it till twelve o'clock to-morrow. You may think better of it. I hope, for your own sake, as well as mine, you may. If not—if I shouldn't hear from you by that time—why then I shall know how to act. Good morning," he added, with a careless air, and whipping his pony, passed on.

On arriving at the Rutland Arms the general proceeded to apologise to Maitland for not being punctual. "I have been," said he, "detained on the road by that infernal jockey, who had the impudence to demand, what he calls, compensation."

"Compensation!" cried Maitland. "For what?"

"For the loss of his character."

"What has that to do with you?"

"That's what I want to know. He says, that as I tempted him to do what he did, and as I was therefore the cause of his ruin, he is determined not to suffer alone, unless I give him a certain sum of money."

"Determined not to suffer alone! Why surely he doesn't mean to expose the whole affair?"

"That's exactly what he *does* mean to do!"

"That's bad. That's bad. Why, how much does he want?"

"Now what do you imagine?"

"I can't imagine. I know that these fellows are not content with a trifle when you happen to be in their power; but what he demands I can't guess."

"Then I'll tell you: he demands a thousand pounds!"

"He does!—A thousand?"

"A thousand."

"Blister his conscience."

"Five hundred won't suit him."

"Did you offer him five hundred?"

"No; but he said that five hundred wouldn't suit him. A thousand is what he demands, and it's clear that he'll be satisfied with nothing less than a thousand."

"Well, what's to be done?"

"I'm not at all disposed to give him that."

"It's too much; too much—a great deal too much; but it will never do to have the thing exposed. He knows that; he knows that an *exposé* would for ever blast your reputation, and hence his demand is so exorbitant."

"But if all *be* exposed it will affect my reputation only among betting men, for whom, of course, I don't care a straw."

"There you are mistaken," rejoined Maitland. "The effect would not be confined to the ring. The case would be published to the world, and you would be treated by the world with contempt. To a man like myself an exposure of this kind may be supposed to be of very slight importance; but I'd infinitely rather give all I possess than have my name published in connexion with an affair of this description. He knows as well as any man can know that such an exposure as that which he contemplates would for ever destroy your reputation as a man of honour; he, therefore, knowing your ability to pay, sets this price upon your character."

"But can you suggest no means of getting over it?"

"I cannot: unfortunately, I cannot."

"I do not care so much about the money—although the sum is considerable when added to that which I have lost—but the idea of being threatened by a fellow like that, is offensive in the extreme."

"It is: but then how under the circumstances can it be avoided?"

"The thought of a scoundrel of that description saying, 'I demand a thousand pounds, and if you don't give me that sum I'll expose you,' is intolerable!"

"These fellows have no feeling; nor must you allow feeling to guide you in this case. The only question for your consideration is this:—Will you give a thousand pounds, or be exposed? In other words:—Is your reputation, as an honourable man, *worth* a thousand pounds to you or not?"

"Is my reputation *worth* a thousand pounds? Why, of course it is."

"Of course; I am well aware of that, and, as such is the case, you must make the best bargain you can."

"Then do you mean to say that I must yield to the threats of that scoundrel?"

"Will it be prudent under the circumstances to do so or not? That is the only point you have to decide. The demand is of course monstrous: but will it—without reference to the manner in which that demand has been made—be prudent to accede to it or not? Your reputation is worth to you more than a thousand pounds, and this fellow has that reputation in his hands so completely, that he can destroy it at once: the question therefore is, will you give a thousand pounds and preserve your reputation, or refuse to give a thousand pounds and lose it? That is the only way now in which

the thing should be viewed. It resolves itself into a mere matter of business. The style in which the demand has been made, ought not to be allowed to interfere—in fact, it has nothing whatever to do with it: you must view it irrespective of that, and decide upon the only point really at issue.”

“Well, it appears that I’m in a nice dilemma! What security have I—if even I give this thousand pounds—what security have I that the thing will not be exposed after all?”

“Why you *can* have no absolute security; but of course, if this money be given, the affair, as far as you are concerned, will be at an end.”

“I am not sure of that: I cannot be sure: he may haunt me with demands: he may renew his threat whenever he happens to want money.”

“Then make him give you a bill for the whole amount, on the understanding that that bill will be presented for payment only in the event of the thing becoming known.”

“Of what use would such a bill be to me, when the fellow may not have a shilling?”

“If you couldn’t get the money, you could send him to prison! It would at least check all further demands.”

“Would he *give* me a bill?”

“I’ve no doubt that he would.”

“How am I to ascertain?”

“I will, if you like, ascertain for you.”

“Well, then, I wish you would, Maitland. But let him distinctly understand that I am determined to have the security you have suggested, before I part with a single pound.”

“He *shall* distinctly understand this; and if he should refuse to give that security, I would advise you not to give him a single pound, but let him pursue whatever course he may think proper.”

“I intend to do so—on that point I’m determined. But when shall I know the result? He said that he should do nothing in it before twelve o’clock to-morrow; but, of course, I should like to have it settled at once.”

“How long shall you remain in the town?”

“I’m in no haste whatever to leave it.”

“Well, I dare say he’ll very soon return. I’ll undertake to see him, if you like, before you leave?”

“I wish you would. I’m anxious to get rid of the whole affair.”

“Of course; and the sooner you get rid of it the better.”

“Then when will you see him?”

“As soon as he returns.”

“Well, do the best you can. I must say that I think five hundred quite sufficient.”

“So do I.”

"Well, see if you can get him to take five hundred. He ought to be satisfied with that. You can do more with him than I can: *I* can't bargain with the fellow: I can't, in fact, trust myself to talk to him at all."

"I'll hear what he says, and see what can be done. He's sure not to keep out long. I'll go at once, and as soon as I've ascertained all, I'll return and let you know the result."

He then left, and proceeded direct to Frank's lodgings, where he waited until Frank returned; when—having allowed him to settle himself again in his easy-chair—he said, "Well, Frank, I find that you have seen him."

"Yes," returned Frank: "I've *seen* him!"

"And put on the screw pretty tightly, too?"

"It's not too tight, I hope?"

"Why, it's quite tight enough, I can tell you. However, we'll now proceed to business. I am here to negotiate. I have, with some considerable difficulty, succeeded in persuading him to stand a thousand pounds—"

"You have?"

"I have; but on certain conditions, which must be complied with."

"What are they?"

"Why, in the first place, you must give him some sort of security that this will be your last demand: that you'll never in any way annoy him again, either by applying to him for money, or even so much as hinting at his connexion with this affair."

"What security does he want? Isn't my word sufficient?"

"Not for him."

"Why, he *can't* suppose that I should be such a blackguard as to take this money, as I may say, you know, in full of all demands, and then come down upon him again!"

"He doesn't know you: nor have you any right to assume that he knows you."

"Well, I'm willing to give him any security I can; but what other security can I give him?"

"A bill for the amount, to be presented only in the event of your failing to adhere to these conditions."

"Well, but then what security should *I* have? How am I to be sure, when I have given this bill, that it *will* be presented only in that event?"

"Oh, that can be managed. He must give you an undertaking to that effect: so, if even he should die without destroying this bill, you would be, of course, perfectly safe."

"Very well; in that case I've no objection. Is there anything else?"

"Yes: one more condition, which is, that you'll do all you can to prevent an investigation by the stewards."

"Do all I *can*! What can I do?"

"Why, you can, at least, endeavour to induce Lord Charles not to bring the case before them."

"Well, I can endeavour; but *that'll* be of no use."

"I don't know that. If you were to go to him and express your sorrow for what had occurred—tell him that you were tempted, and so on—and beg of him to carry the thing no further: you might prevail upon him—"

"Never! You may take your oath of that. If I were to go to him, he'd kick me out of the place."

"I don't believe it. I do not believe it. I'm sure he'd hear all you had to say, and if even you could not prevail upon him, the fact of your going would look well: he'd like it: it would tend to soften him down; and therefore, for your own sake, Frank, you ought to go."

"If I thought it would be of the slightest use I'd go at once, because, of course, I'm more anxious than any other man *can* be to have the affair hushed up; but if even he were to be softened down he'd think it his duty to bring the matter forward. He'd say, 'I must do it not only for the purpose of punishing you, but in justice to others, for you may carry on the same game with the next man who employs you.'"

"Why, you don't expect in any case to ride again, do you?"

"No, that's settled: that's entirely out of the question. I never expect that: I've given up all idea of it."

"Very well; then you *can't* carry on the same game. If you tell him that you'll never even attempt to ride again, the plea to which you have alluded—his strongest plea—that of justice to others—must fall to the ground. Go to him: take my advice and go at once. You know where to find him: he's still at the Rutland Arms. Go now. You'll be, of course, as humble as possible, and if you don't succeed in inducing him to give no further publicity to the affair, he's not the man I have always imagined him to be."

"Well, I'll go: but I'm sure it'll be of no use."

"It can do no harm, if it does no good; but it *will* do good: I feel certain of that. At all events, by going you'll prove, at least, this, that you have done all in your power to avoid an investigation."

"Very well. Then, will you remain here till I return?"

"I may as well. You'll not be long about it. He'll not be detained long, of course?"

"No, that's quite clear; it'll be done off-hand, either one way or the other."



"Then, you'd better order your pony to be put in at once."

Frank did so; and having been assisted into the gig, he drove up to the Rutland Arms.

"Is Lord Charles in the way?" he inquired of one of the waiters.

"Yes; he's in his room."

"I wish you'd go up and tell him I'm here. Tell him, please, that I hope he'll see me, as I've something particular to say."

The waiter at once delivered the message; and Lord Charles desired that Frank should be shown up.

"Well," said his lordship, sternly, as Frank feebly entered the room, "what do *you* want?"

"I beg your lordship's pardon," replied Frank, faintly, "but I couldn't rest till I'd asked your lordship to forgive me."

"Forgive you! A robber and a scoundrel like you! I wonder you are not ashamed to look me in the face?"

"My lord, I *am* ashamed; I am ashamed, my lord; and I'm sorry, very sorry, I was tempted."

"Tempted! Who tempted you? Any one whom *I* know?"

"No, my lord, he's not known at all on the turf. But I hope your lordship will forgive me. I hope you'll think I've suffered enough in mind and in body. I hope, my lord, you'll not make me suffer any more."

"Suffer; you deserve to suffer."

"I do, my lord; I know it well. But, as your lordship has *nearly* killed me, and as I am utterly ruined for life, I hope, my lord, that you will be satisfied without exposing me further by bringing the case before the stewards."

"That I am bound to do; I'm bound to make an example of you in justice to others, whom your villanous practices might hereafter ruin."

"My lord, I shall never ride again."

"I'll take care you never do."

"I'll never attempt it, my lord; and, as in that case I shan't have the *power* to injure any one, I do hope your lordship will be merciful to me, and not bring the case to an investigation."

"I'll make no promise. With regard to your physical suffering, had I cut all the flesh from your bones I should have done no more than you deserve. My object is now to protect others. I may not call for an investigation; I *may* not, but I'll make no promise."

"If your lordship *wouldn't* expose me further—"

"I'll make no promise whatever. Now go."

Frank, who knew that to say more then would be unwise, bowed humbly and left the room; and, having been assisted again into his gig, he drove back to his lodgings, and explained to Maitland the substance of all that had occurred.

"Very good," said Maitland, when all had been related. "You

did it very well. That'll do. I was quite sure that if you appealed to his feelings you'd manage it. *He'll* not proceed. He thinks you have suffered enough, no doubt. I'll now go back to the general, and as all the preliminaries have been arranged, I'll get him to settle the matter at once."

He then returned to the Rutland Arms ; and, in less than an hour, Frank had a cheque in exchange for a bill for a thousand pounds.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE PROPOSAL.

JULIA now occupied all Maitland's thoughts. She had not written to *him* on the subject of his formal declaration ; but the contents of a letter which Georgiana received, and which he had seen, sufficiently convinced him that that declaration was not at all displeasing. He felt sure that he had succeeded in gaining her affections, and, notwithstanding he had ascertained that she repudiated the idea of a clandestine marriage, being certain of having won her heart, he entertained no doubt of being eventually able to secure her hand. He therefore, immediately after everything connected with the betting transaction had been settled, prepared to revisit London ; and having prevailed upon Georgiana to announce his coming, in a letter to Julia, he started, inspired with the most pleasing hopes.

On his arrival, he went directly to the house in which he had before resided, and having ascertained that he could have the same rooms, he took possession of them at once.

It was evening when he arrived ; but he had no sooner established himself at one of the front windows than he was delighted to find that Julia was on the look out. The blinds were, however, soon after drawn, and he saw no more of her that night ; but, in the morning, about eleven, after much mutual peeping, she left the house, attended as before, and he almost immediately followed.

As she proceeded, he fancied that he never before beheld so elegant a figure. Her walk was, in his judgment, graceful in the extreme ; and while he wished that the servant had been anywhere in the world but where he was, he did hope that she would again enter some convenient shop, and thus afford him another opportunity of conversing with her on the all-important subject.

She appeared, however, to be in no haste to do this ; but, eventually, the hope which had sustained him was realised ; she entered

a shop—the very shop she entered before, and he followed, and having raised his hat, extended his hand, which she took, timidly it is true, but not unwillingly.

“I am,” said he, “*delighted* to see you; I hope that you are in perfect health?”

Julia bowed, and blushed deeply; but was silent.

“You know not,” he continued, “how frequently, how constantly, your name is mentioned at Newmarket.”

“Georgiana,” said Julia, “I hope is quite well?”

“Quite: she enjoys excellent health. She sends her kindest love to you.”

“When did you arrive?”

“Last evening.”

“Do you purpose remaining in town long?”

“My stay,” replied Maitland, with an expression of intensity, the meaning of which Julia well understood, “depends entirely upon one in whom my whole soul is centred, and who alone has the power to make me happy.”

Julia again blushed; but after a pause, said, “Then you do not exactly know when you will return?”

“I do not,” replied Maitland; “I do, however, hope to return soon; but I cannot return until I have ascertained whether I am to be happy or wretched for life.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed Julia. “Then your visit is one of *great* importance?”

“It is: to me, it is of the greatest possible importance.”

“Well, then, I hope the result will be satisfactory.”

“Do you really? Do you hope?”

“Of course I do!” said Julia. “And yet,” she continued, with all her characteristic archness, “I don’t know that I ought to foster any feeling on the subject, for I fear that you have been extremely naughty! I may as well mention the circumstance at once: I some time since received a letter—a most extraordinary letter—with your name attached to it! Was that a forgery?”

Maitland shook his head, and slightly smiled.

“But you do not mean to say that that letter was sent absolutely by *you*?”

“I cannot,” said Maitland, “deny that it was; nor would I deny it for the world!”

“Well, but you would not contend for the *propriety* of sending a letter of that description to me?”

“I have had no experience in these matters,” replied Maitland; “I have, therefore, to plead ignorance of the rules prescribed; but if there be any impropriety of loving her to whom that letter was addressed—”

“Nay,” interrupted Julia, “I do not speak of that: I speak

solely with reference to the fact of your having addressed that letter to me !”

“I addressed it to her whom I ardently love: and if to love her, and to let her know I love her, be a crime—”

“Nay, nay, you do not look at the thing in the right light. I did not contend for it’s being a *crime*; I spoke merely of the *impropriety* of addressing that letter to me !”

“Whom else should I have addressed it ?”

“Whom should you have addressed ?” returned Julia. “My father !”

“My sweet girl,” said Maitland, “my lovely one!—have I not explained to you, that between him and me there exists feelings which nothing, while we remain in our present relative positions, can subdue ?”

“You have told me,” returned Julia, “that a lamentable misunderstanding exists between you.”

“And that misunderstanding would have been fatal to my hopes, had I ventured to address him instead of you. I have not the slightest doubt, that if those hopes were realised, he and I should again become friends; but until—”

“Colonel Cartwright,” said Julia, “the time is come when it is absolutely necessary that we should understand each other. You have told me that you love me; and I am not—having my share of woman’s vanity—I am not disinclined to believe it; but until you and my father become reconciled—until he be induced to sanction our meeting, I must not, I feel that I really must *not*, again meet you !”

“Then all is lost,” said Maitland, solemnly; “in this world we shall never meet again.”

“Have you any desire to become reconciled ?”

“I have the most anxious, the most ardent desire—for your sake there’s nothing that I would *not* do to be once more on friendly terms with him.”

“Why, then, do you not *endeavour* to effect a reconciliation ?”

“I am endeavouring to do so now: I know that without your assistance any direct attempt on my part would be even worse than useless, because it would deprive me at once of your assistance for ever; but if you were in a different position—if I had the happy privilege of calling you my own sweet wife, a reconciliation would be immediately effected, and we should henceforth live in harmony and peace. As, however, you appear to be unhappily determined on meeting me no more without his sanction, I have but to add, that as I love you, Julia, I hope that every blessing upon earth may be yours. If I felt that I could not make you happy, Julia, I love you too dearly even to wish you to be my wife; but feeling, as I do, well convinced that I *could*, I have but to embrace the enduring regret, that social forms supersede nature. God bless you,” he added, rising

and taking her hand, "be happy—quite happy—as happy, Julia, as I should have been had I never beheld you. God bless you," he repeated; and having pressed her hand, he bowed with an expression of sorrow, and left her.

"All right!" he exclaimed, as he quitted the shop—to himself, of course, and that quite confidently—"all right, that'll do! I've cleared the course, and now she'll run the race herself. I've told her all that I wish her to know, and that will be sufficient. She must not see me again to-day: nor will I to-morrow appear to see *her*. She'll reflect upon all that has passed, and reflection will whet her desire to adopt my views."

Having reached the tavern he entered before, he went in, and calling for a pint of sherry, sat and dwelt upon the tendency of all that he had said, until it occurred to him that Mildmay—upon whom Tom had wished him to call—would be the very man to go with him into the City for the purpose of investing his money in the Funds.

"He, of course, understands it," said he to himself, "and I know no more about it than a fool. If I go down myself, I shall get hold of some scamp who'll probably swindle me out of the lot. I'll call upon him at once, and get him to go with me, and then, of course, all will be secure."

He therefore rang the bell at once, and having paid for the wine, proceeded to the residence of Mildmay, whom he found at home, and disengaged, and who received him with great cordiality.

"Mr. Mildmay," said he, having answered all the questions that were put to him with reference to Tom and Georgiana, "do you know how to go to work to place money in the Funds?"

"Oh! yes," replied Mildmay; "all you have to do is to go to a broker, who'll manage it for you at once."

"I have five thousand pounds which I am anxious to invest: would you do me the favour to go into the City with me?"

"With pleasure," said Mildmay, "with the greatest pleasure. I know a stockbroker in Mincing-lane: he's a friend of mine—"

"Then he's the very man to whom I should like to go. And now, how are you situated to-day?—are you busy?"

"Not at all!"

"Then will you and your good lady do me the favour to dine with me at Blackwall to-day?"

"We shall be most happy to do so."

"We can call on your friend in Mincing-lane on our way."

"Exactly. That will take up but very little time. We must, however, be there before four. Will you excuse me one moment?"

Maitland bowed, and Mildmay went up at once to Mary.

"Mary," said he, "are you disposed to have a treat?"

"A treat?" echoed Mary, whom Mildmay, by virtue of kind expostulation, had nearly brought round, "what sort of a treat, dear?"

"Would you like to dine at Blackwall to-day?"

"Oh! yes, I should, *dearly!*"

"Then put on your things: Colonel Cartwright is here."

"What, the gentleman who dined with us some time since?"

"Yes: he wishes us to dine there to-day with him."

"Oh! I am *so* delighted! But what, my dear—what are we to do with that nice leg of lamb which is down at the fire?"

"Oh, let it remain there until it is done, and then we can have it cold for supper!"

"Exactly: yes, that will be nice. But, William dear: what dress shall I put on?"

"Oh! any dress you please! Of course, the more quiet it is the better!"

"Yes: well, then, I'll put on my lilac satinet. That *will* be quiet, will it not? And my new white bonnet, you know—that without the flowers: I know you like that: I'll put that on. Shall I wear a *white* veil?"

"Your taste, my dear, has been of late so very much improved, that I'm quite sure you'll put nothing on which will cause you to look unlike a lady."

Mary kissed him warmly, and ran up to dress; while he returned well pleased to Maitland.

"It is now two," said he: "if we start at half-past, we shall be in the City by three."

"Oh, there's plenty of time," returned Maitland. "But when do you think of running down again to Newmarket? I need not tell you how glad they would be to see you; but this I must tell you, that Tom requested me not to leave town until I had extorted from you a promise to run down and see them within a month."

"I should be of course happy to do so, but I'm afraid I shall be unable to see them so soon. I am about to enter into a speculation, the preliminaries of which have yet to be arranged. However, I may know more about it before you leave."

He then ordered lunch, of which both partook, and sat conversing on various topics, till Mary appeared, when Maitland greeted her with marked respect, and they soon after started in a coach for the City.

On their arrival at Mincing-lane, they found the broker about to proceed to the Exchange, and when Mildmay had explained to him the object of Maitland, an appointment was made for eleven o'clock the next morning.

"He appears to be quite a man of business," observed Maitland, when he and Mildmay had re-entered the coach. "It amazes me, however, to hear men talk of thousands as coolly as they would about a sixpence."

"It is," returned Mildmay, "amazing to those who have been unaccustomed to associate with such men, but although they talk of

thousands just as coolly as they would about a sixpence, they'll stickle for a sixpence as if it were a thousand."

"Well," said Mary, "if I had the thousands, the sixpences might go! Give me the thousands! They're the things I should like—they wouldn't catch me caring about a sixpence."

Maitland smiled, and then gaily conversed with her and Mildmay, until they reached Blackwall, where they had a delicious dinner, and spent a most delightful evening. It is true that they had their strictly private thoughts and wishes. Mary thought how exceedingly pleasant it would be to dine there every day throughout the year, and most ardently wished that she could do so, and while Mildmay thought of Maitland's five thousand pounds, being the sum he then required, and wished that he had it, Maitland thought of Julia, and wished that she were there. But these thoughts and wishes were not allowed then to interfere much with their enjoyment: they sat and conversed in the most cheerful strain until it became quite dark, when they left, well pleased with themselves and each other, and gaily returned to town.

During the whole of this time, however, Julia was tortured. She believed that Maitland loved her fondly, and felt that she as fondly loved him; but the conviction with which he had inspired her, that she must either marry clandestinely, or lose him, rendered her perfectly wretched.

"What's to be done!" she constantly exclaimed, "what—what is to be done! His tone assures me that he can never obtain the sanction of my father!—it assures me that he never will seek to obtain it, lest he should thereby lose me for ever. Am I then to sacrifice my happiness for life? Am I to be for life miserable, rather than omit to perform one act of duty? Surely under the circumstances that omission would be venial! I am of age! I am now my own mistress! If I were a young thing of sixteen, the case would be altogether different!—then, indeed, it might be wrong, very, very wrong, to marry without the consent of my father—but as it is, I cannot see that that consent should be regarded as absolutely indispensable. It never, never could have been intended that a woman of twenty-one should be under the same control as a girl of sixteen. If I am not now at liberty to choose for myself, when shall I be at liberty to do so? If the line be not drawn between age and nonage, when can it be drawn? I may live till I am sixty, without having the liberty of marrying without his consent, if—being of age—I have not that liberty now. I should *like* to have his sanction! I would do almost anything in the world to obtain it; but if that be impossible—and I feel well convinced that it is—*am* I to sacrifice every joy on earth to this one act of duty? He loves me: I know that he does; Georgiana knows it too; and if I do not love him, then woman never yet loved man. Besides, what objection can by

any possibility be raised against him? He is a gentleman!—a man of education and talent—an accomplished man—a man who was formerly the friend of my father, and who is, moreover, equal in point of rank with my father. What is there then to object to? I am quite sure that no one can object to his appearance! There cannot, therefore, be any real objection raised. If he were an ugly man, or an uneducated man, or even a poor man, why then, indeed, he might be objected to; but as he is what he is, the idea of his being objected to is ridiculous. And surely no one will contend that the mere misunderstanding which exists between him and my father should be allowed to destroy my happiness for life? It must not—it *must* not—and yet I do feel that I ought to solicit my father's consent."

Upon these conflicting views Julia dwelt throughout the night, and when in the morning she arose, she had arrived at no conclusion. She knew not at all how to act. She knew not whether to give him another opportunity of conversing with her on the subject or not. She sometimes thought that she ought to do so; and then again felt that she ought not. She dressed herself, however, with care, and looked for him most anxiously.

But Maitland, that morning, kept aloof: he did not appear at the window at all; he saw her, and watched her anxiety through his glass, but would not be seen by her until half-past ten, when he sent for a cab, and left the house with a well-assumed air of dejection.

Nor did she see him again that day: for, having transacted his business in the City, he went with Mary and Mildmay to Greenwich, where they dined, and remained until late in the evening.

The next morning, however, he felt it correct to establish himself again at the window, and saw Julia frequently, looking pale and languid, but manifestly pleased to see him there. He held a book in his hand, and pretended to be reading, and taking no notice whatever of her; but in reality watched her every movement, and panted to see her come forth.

Three hours elapsed, and she still kept within, being utterly unable to make up her mind; but having at length resolved on giving him another opportunity, she dressed herself and left the house. She was, of course, attended by the servant as before; but Maitland then cared but little for that: he followed her into St. James's Park, where, having taken a circle, he met her.

"Now," thought he, "I must not pass: the thing must now be done." And as he approached her he raised his hat and extended his hand, which she took.

"Pardon me," he observed, "for addressing you again; but I felt that I could not leave town until I had ascertained, beyond all doubt, whether you adhered to your expressed resolution. You know not how I am tortured, Julia, if you did, you would, I am sure,



*pity* me. Your heart is too warm, too kind, too affectionate, to allow you to treat me even now with contempt; but if you knew all—if you knew what I endure—that knowledge would be the germ, at least, of sympathy. When I leave you,” he added, as they walked side by side, “when I leave you, Julia, should your formerly expressed resolution be fixed, I propose to leave the land in which you live.”

“I thought,” said Julia, timidly, “that you were about to return to Newmarket?”

“I cannot return to Newmarket: I cannot return to any place where the fact of my having been rejected may be known.”

“I do not think,” said Julia, faintly, “that you ought to consider yourself rejected.”

“I must do so. If that resolution be adhered to, I shall be rejected indeed.”

“Nay, Colonel Cartwright, I have not rejected you: on the contrary, I think that I have proved that I have no desire to reject you. The result of our last conversation was a declaration, on my part, that I could not feel justified in acting without my father’s sanction.”

“Which sanction, I endeavoured to assure you, could never be obtained. Were we married, Julia, the case would be altered; your happiness, added to my desire to renew a friendship which, I feel, never ought to have been severed, would prompt him at once to yield; but—”

“*Would* it not do so now? If I were to appeal to him—if I were to say that my happiness depended upon this reconciliation—would it not have the same effect?”

“No, Julia, no; because, then he would imagine that that very fact placed him in a humiliating position, and as he would say, ‘Now, if I renew this friendship, it will be said to be solely for the purpose of inducing him to marry my daughter,’ he would not—I feel sure that he would not—sanction the match for one moment.”

“Shall I—will you allow me to prove this?”

“The slightest attempt would be fatal to my hopes.”

“Than what *can* I do? What would you have me do?”

“Julia, I would have you secure your own happiness as well as mine!”

“By what means?”

“By consenting to give me this fair hand, as I feel that our hearts are pledged already.”

“Colonel Cartwright!” said Julia, “I will do so, provided you obtain the consent of my father.”

“That, Julia, is impossible.”

“Then you would have me do so without his consent?”

“Julia,” replied Maitland, with an expression of the most intense affection, “without his consent only can it be done.”

"But have you not heard that happiness is never the result of a marriage of that description?"

"I have; but experience has proved it to be false. Take the case of your own dear friend for an example. Is not she happy?"

"The general has not yet forgiven her."

"And why? I have spoken to him on the subject again and again; I have again and again urged him to do so, and why does he refuse? His sole reason is, that Tom—although as good a fellow as ever breathed—is not a gentleman; that his origin is low—that he has had no education—that he is not sufficiently refined—and that, therefore, he cannot associate with him. But for that they would have been reconciled long ago. It is purely a matter of *pride* with him. He knows that they are happy: he knows that they love each other fondly: he knows that Mrs. Brooke constantly visits them, but *pride* will not allow him to associate with Tom. Had Tom been a gentleman—had he been a man of any education at all—the general would at once have come round: but the fact of his having been a groom—his own groom—is death to every hope of a perfect reconciliation. I do not mention this in disparagement of Tom, for as a generous, good-tempered, warm-hearted fellow, I highly respect him; I allude to it merely in order to show that this alone prompts the general to hold out, and that nothing of the kind can occur in your case, as the colonel, the general, and I are, in a social point of view, on a perfect equality. As I have before said, I have not the slightest doubt that in less than a month after our happy marriage the colonel and I shall be as good friends as ever, and if any one should be required to assist in promoting an immediate reconciliation, I know that the general would render that assistance, and feel most happy to do so. He is the man to whom—in the event of your consenting—I shall immediately apply. The colonel then may stipulate for this, that if he forgives you the general must forgive Georgiana, and if he should you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have rendered a dear friend perfectly happy. I am, and always was, of a sanguine temperament, and, therefore, I hope you'll pardon me for speaking in this strain, but if you should consent to make me happy, instead of plunging me into the gulf of despair, I propose first to have our marriage solemnised in London in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Mildmay, who are highly esteemed friends of Georgiana and Tom, and then go down to Newmarket, having promised, in the event of my success, to spend the honeymoon there."

"What, at Georgiana's residence?"

"Yes: they made me promise that I would do so in the event of my marriage with you."

"But Mr. and Mrs. Mildmay: I haven't the pleasure of knowing them. I remember that Georgiana in one of her letters stated that Mr. and Mrs. Mildmay were there some time since on a visit, but

she did not explain to me who they were. Are they living in London?"

"Yes: I dined with them yesterday and the day before. He is a man of distinguished literary attainments, and she is a very quiet, amiable person. You would be much pleased with them, and I should be able, I have no doubt, to induce them to go down to Newmarket with us."

"Well," cried Julia, with a smile, "you speak, Colonel Cartwright, as if the thing were absolutely settled."

"I hope that you will pardon me for doing so, but I speak thus only because I cannot believe that you will render me wretched for life. Oh, Julia, if you would but consent, you know not how happy you would make me. There are others, too, whom you would thereby make happy—one whom you love, and who loves you dearly—I mean Georgiana—another who respects you highly, and who feels that you were the cause of his being so happy—I mean Tom—and a third—I allude to Tom's father—who blesses your name, and who regards you as the means of securing happiness to her, who is so like his daughter, whom he lost years ago. It will not, however, become me to dwell upon this: it will be quite sufficient for me to assure you that you will be idolised by them all, and that they will endeavour to promote your happiness by all the means at their command."

"I have not the slightest doubt that Georgiana would treat me kindly."

"Kindly! you are her goddess! Mrs. Brooke, too, speaks in the most affectionate terms of you. You will also find a most attached friend in the general."

"I wish that you would allow me to speak to papa."

"Julia, I, of course, do not presume to have any control over your actions—"

"Then do let me speak to him: let me appeal to him: let me implore him to allow me to effect a reconciliation."

"You are, of course, at liberty to do so, Julia: and if you wish to annihilate every earthly hope I have, you will do so; but if you desire to secure our mutual happiness, you will not. I know him too well to believe that such an appeal would not destroy all. He is sensitive, Julia—sensitive in the extreme—"

"I am aware of it."

"And being aware of that, you, on reflection, must feel that anything having a tendency to induce him to believe that the world would think for a moment that he had sacrificed, not his honour, but his pride, would be repudiated by him at once. No, Julia, the foundation of our happiness must be laid necessarily without his consent. When that has been accomplished, all will be secure."

"Well, Colonel Cartwright, I am not indisposed to *reflect* upon all that you have said."

"Do so, Julia; and pray let me know the result of your reflection to-morrow."

"To-morrow? *So soon?*"

"Why not to-morrow? Affairs of this description are always better settled at once."

"But to-morrow?"

"Ay, in the morning; *do* let me see you here again in the morning."

"Well, I will be *here*! but I cannot promise to let you then know the result."

"Will you promise to endeavour to do so?"

"I will."

"Bless you! you have made me comparatively happy. And will you allow me, in the interim, to speak to Mr. and Mrs. Mildmay on the subject."

"On what subject?"

"On the subject of their accompanying us first to church and then to Newmarket."

"Oh!" replied Julia, blushing, "I must leave that entirely to you."

"Then I will do so. I will do so to-day. What time shall I have the happiness of seeing you here in the morning?"

"I will be here about twelve."

"At twelve I will be in this very spot. Pray reflect upon all that I have said."

"I will."

"And now allow me to ask you one question:—Is the servant who is behind us trustworthy?"

"I believe him to be so."

"That's fortunate. Then to-morrow, at twelve."

"I will be here."

"Bless you! Julia; you have filled my heart with joy! I feel that we shall yet be the happiest of the happy."

He then again took her hand, and having pressed it warmly, bade her adieu; and on passing the servant he gave him a sovereign, and placed his finger upon his lips to enjoin silence.

"Now," he exclaimed, "all is secure! She is mine! I am sure of her! all is safe now. To-morrow her answer will be—'I am yours.'"

Having left the Park with feelings of rapture, he proceeded at once to the residence of Mildmay, whom he found in his study with Mary, and by whom he was received with the utmost warmth.

"Mr. Mildmay," said he, as he entered, "you have, in your presence, a happy man!"

"I am very glad to hear it," returned Mildmay, smiling, "but I never saw you miserable yet."

"Perhaps not: perhaps not absolutely miserable, but I am more happy now than I ever was. I'll explain to you all, for you are the only man in town to whom I can explain, and I feel I cannot keep it to myself. You have heard of Miss Storr, of course; Colonel Storr's daughter?"

"Yes: Mrs. Todd's friend?"

"The same."

"Oh, *I've* heard of her," cried Mary; "she's the young lady that brought about the marriage."

"Exactly. And now I'll reveal to you a secret. She and I have been on the most affectionate terms—"

"What! do you mean to say, then," cried Mary, "that you have been paying your addresses to her?"

"I do; and I came up to London expressly in order to bring the affair to an issue."

"Well," cried Mary, whose countenance brightened up, "well; and have you done so?"

"I have," replied Maitland; "I feel that I have; but to-morrow will decide it."

"Then I wish to-day was to-morrow, with all my heart. Is she beautiful?"

"I think so."

"Then of course she is; but when is it to be? I'm so anxious now to know all about it. When do you think of going to church?"

"I hope in a very few days."

"Yes; well?"

"Well; now I have a favour to ask of you both: I want you to accompany us."

"Oh! I shall be delighted! Won't you, William?"

"You are the only friends I have in town," pursued Maitland, "and by doing me this favour, you would delight both me and her; and more especially as *her* immediate friends will not be present."

"More especially as *her* immediate friends will not be present!" echoed Mildmay. "How is that?"

"Storr and I," replied Maitland, "were on intimate terms in India, but we, unfortunately, quarrelled. The fact is, he injured me; and, therefore, by him I have never been forgiven."

"Then I presume this marriage will be without his sanction?"

"It will be; but as she is now of age, that will, of course, be no bar."

"Of course not!" cried Mary. "Nor more it ~~don't~~ ought. I dare say, indeed, if she waits for that, poor thing, she may wait long enough. I'm glad she's got the spirit to do it without!"

"Does he know of it at all?" inquired Mildmay.

"No," replied Maitland; "if he did, he would, in all probability, take her out of the country."

"Ay, or send her to some distant place," cried Mary, "as the general did Mrs. Todd. I've no patience with such ways. For my part, I don't know what fathers are made of!"

"I shall be happy," said Mildmay, "of course, to render you all the assistance in my power, and if by going to church—"

"That is not"—interrupted Maitland, with a smile—"that is not all that I want you to do. As I have promised to spend the honeymoon at Tom's, I want you and Mrs. Mildmay to accompany us there."

"Oh, that *will* be delightful," cried Mary. "Do go, dear! Say you will, there's a dear—do go!"

"I should like to go much," replied Mildmay, "but I fear that I shall be quite unable to do that."

"Oh, manage it somehow: do, there's a love! You can put off that nasty writing for a time!"

"You need not remain down there long," added Maitland; "you can leave, if you like, at the end of a week! But do go down with us."

"Yes, do, there's a dear," continued Mary. "Say you will. Do, to oblige me, there's a love!"

A thought struck Mildmay—a thought which had reference to the speculation into which he was about to enter, and which prompted him at once to consent. He did consent, and Maitland dined with them, and when he had passed a most agreeable evening, he left them, panting for the morrow.

In the mean time, Julia was lost in a perfect labyrinth of conjecture. Having promised to reflect upon all that Maitland had said, she endeavoured to perform that promise calmly; but instead of reflecting upon every point, she made every point a spur to her bounding imagination. It is true, that she argued—yes, she argued—but then she merely argued with herself; and in all such cases, the result is favourable to the feelings of those who argue. We never start a point in opposition to those feelings, without the consciousness of being able to assert it. We are then most valiant. We raise giants for destruction with surpassing courage. We fear them not: we drag them forth, and place them boldly before us! The power which we possess over all the arguments we bring against ourselves, is really absolute.

"Suppose," said Julia, "suppose papa should not forgive me! And yet, why should I suppose that which I feel to be impossible? Not forgive me—not when he finds that I am happy? But shall I be happy? Why can I entertain a single doubt upon the subject? Can I, for a moment, believe that I shall not? I shall be in the very centre of a circle of happiness. There's the colonel, who has proved that he passionately loves me: there's Georgiana, whose affection for me is unbounded; there's her husband, who holds me in

the highest esteem; there's Mrs. Brooke, who ever did regard me with the kindest feelings, and the general, who has always treated me as if I had been his own child. They will all combine to render me happy, and happiness must be of necessity the result. But then how is the reconciliation between the colonel and my father to be effected? Why, of course, through the instrumentality of the general. He, as a friend of the colonel, will, of course, use all his influence, while I must induce mamma to do the same. But how—if I take this step—how will it operate upon *her*? Why, at first, she may pretend to be angry, but she cannot be—she never was—angry long. It will not be as if I had married a stranger. The colonel is known to them all. Nor will it be as if I had married a poor man, or one of whom they *could* be ashamed! Papa must become reconciled to him at once. I have no fear whatever of *that*. But the thought of marrying clandestinely renders me irresolute still."

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## JULIA'S DECISION.

NOTWITHSTANDING Julia's utter inability to conquer her irresolution, she repaired to the Park the next morning at twelve, and found Maitland near the appointed spot.

"Dear Julia!" he exclaimed, having approached her with an expression of anxiety mingled with delight. "My noble girl, you have, indeed, performed your promise faithfully. Your presence, dear one, inspires me with joy; and yet I tremble to put that question to you which will at once elicit my fate. But, keep me—pray keep me no longer in suspense. Am I henceforth to dwell in a paradise of happiness, or to wander in a wilderness of misery? Say, sweet Julia, have you decided?"

"I have not," replied Julia, faintly. "I have not yet had time to decide: nor did I promise to decide so soon."

"I am aware of it: I am aware that you merely promised to endeavour to decide."

"And I have indeed endeavoured to do so, but in vain: I have been unable to come to any decision."

"Then, pardon me, if I beg of you to allow me to assist you. Julia, this suspense is torture. I feel that you have confidence in me, and that therefore you believe me to be worthy of confidence. Let me then prompt you to pursue the only course by which our happiness can be secured. Julia, you know that I love you: you

know that your happiness is my aim. I am actuated by no selfish passion: on the contrary, if you were now to confess to me that you really love another, and thereby convince me that you feel that you could be happy with another, I would not persecute you, Julia, with any additional importunities: no: I would urge my suit no further, although I should love you dearly still. If this, which I have conceived, Julia, be so in reality—if another be in possession of that heart which I have so fervently hoped to gain—”

“No, no,” said Julia, earnestly; “it is not so. You are the only—I mean,” she added, after a pause, during which she felt greatly embarrassed, “I mean—”

“Did you not mean to say the only one—?”

“The only one,” added Julia, promptly, “with whom I have conversed on the subject.”

Maitland glanced at her affectionately and smiled, and having pressed her hand warmly, proceeded.

“Julia,” said he, “I feel that I *am* the only one with whom you have conversed on the subject: I also feel instinctively that our affections are reciprocal. Pardon me for saying so much; but there are chords in loving hearts which vibrate mutually; and which, by virtue of the indefinable electricity of love, convey intelligence from heart to heart without external aid.”

“And yet,” said Julia, “you thought it possible that I might love another!”

“Apprehension, my sweet one, created that thought, in defiance of the heart’s purer promptings; but my object in giving expression to it was to prove that I was animated by no selfish passion. I *would*—if you really loved another—I *would* withdraw the claim which now I feel that Nature gives me; but, as happily, Julia, you do *not*, I have to urge it still. And now,” he continued, having led her to a seat, while the servant, who *knew* that he wasn’t wanted, kept aloof—“let me prevail upon you, dearest girl, to adopt the course I yesterday suggested. You believe—Julia, I am sure you believe—that I would induce you to do nothing in the slightest degree calculated to diminish that happiness which it will be my constant study to promote, and believing this, let me now urge you not only to confide in my honour, but to depend upon my judgment. Will you—dear one—will you be mine?”

Julia was silent.

“You have,” he continued, “you have told me already that you will, if I obtain the consent of your father; and I have already endeavoured to convince you that his consent can never be obtained. It is to me, my dearest, abundantly clear, that unless we act without his sanction, we shall never be united; and, therefore, the question resolves itself to this: Will you adopt the only course by which our happiness can be secured?”



Julia was silent still.

"Consider," he added; "consider, dear girl, you will not be with strangers! You will leave home to visit none but friends—dear friends—friends who will make every effort of which they are capable to render your happiness perfect."

"Of that," said Julia, "I have not the slightest doubt. But I dare not consent to the step you propose: I dare not do it."

"Dare not, Julia! You have far more courage than you imagine. I know that you have: I know that you possess a noble spirit, Julia!—a spirit which is not to be subdued by the operation of cold conventionalities. You dare not? Why, are you not of age? Are you not, therefore, sole mistress of your own actions? You have strength of mind, discretion, judgment: you have a heart which prompts the pursuit of a course which you know will lead to happiness, and yet when that course lies clear before you, and you are thus earnestly urged to pursue it, you tell me that you *dare* not! Why, Julia! But come, confide in me! You will!" he exclaimed, as she placed her hand in his. "*Dear* girl, you have filled my heart with joy! My devotion shall prove to you how highly you are prized. And now, my sweet one, now for your plans. In order that we may be united to-morrow—"

"To-morrow!" cried Julia. "Oh, dear! I cannot think of leaving so soon!"

"Why not, my lovely one? why not?"

"Oh! I have nothing prepared!"

"You have a heart, my Julia, prepared to be happy! No other preparation on your part is required. I will, in the course of the morning, arrange all the preliminaries; and, to-morrow, dearest, meet me as you are. At what hour do you usually have breakfast?"

"We meet in the parlour at eight."

"Then, you rise about seven, I presume?"

"Yes, generally."

"You could rise *somewhat* earlier to-morrow, could you not? Could you not also leave the house unperceived?"

"I *could* do so; but at half-past seven my absence would be discovered."

"At half-past seven," said Maitland, thoughtfully; "half-past seven. The earliest hour, I believe, is eight: and, therefore, an immediate pursuit must be prevented. What time," he added, after a pause, "what time do you usually take your morning's walk?"

"Usually about eleven."

"Could you not make it an hour earlier to-morrow?"

"I could; but then I should be of course attended by the servant."

"That will be of no importance. We can arrange all without

his knowledge. The shop, my love," he continued, "in which I had the happiness to meet you for the first time in London, has two entrances."

"It has."

"You could easily, Julia, enter to-morrow morning at one door, and, having made some trifling purchase, come out at the other?"

"I could," replied Julia.

"Then let it be thus decided. Enter at—the north door, I think, it is—the door at which I have always entered—as soon after eleven as you conveniently can, and I will be near the opposite door with a carriage to receive you; when, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Mildmay, we can at once proceed to church, have the ceremony performed, and be miles on our road to Newmarket before even the servant can know of your departure. This, I think, dear, will be a most excellent plan: what do *you* think?"

"I have but one objection to it," replied Julia, faintly; "and that applies to the secret character of the whole proceeding."

"I am aware, my love," said Maitland, "that you must object to that, and I appreciate highly those feelings which form the germ of that objection. I myself object to the secrecy to which you allude, and were it not absolutely indispensable, that objection would be fatal to the pursuit of the course proposed; but, as I feel, my dear Julia, that this secrecy is, under existing circumstances, essential to our happiness, I also feel that that objection ought at once to be surmounted. In a few hours, Julia, the necessity for this secrecy will have ceased to exist. It annoys us both now, but it will not annoy us then. We shall then be in a position to proclaim to the world that two fond hearts have been for ever united, and to receive the congratulations of those who love us—of those by whom virtue and honour are prized. We must, therefore, my dear girl, bear with this annoyance a few hours longer. Meet me in the morning as soon after eleven as you can, and then we will rid ourselves of it at once."

"Mrs. Mildmay, I think you said, will be in the carriage?"

"They will be both with me. We have arranged it all. They will not only go with us to church, but they will accompany us down to Newmarket."

"Indeed!"

"I thought that that arrangement would be pleasing to my Julia?"

"I believe you to be a dear, kind soul!" she exclaimed. "But shall we reach Newmarket to-morrow?"

"In the evening: if, indeed, you be not too much fatigued."

"Oh, you need not be at all apprehensive of that."

"We shall not, of course, travel as if we dreaded pursuit. At the end of the first stage we can stop and have lunch: we can then go

on thirty miles farther and have dinner: and after dinner—as we shall then have but twenty miles to go—you will soon be in the arms of Georgiana, who will—under the happy circumstances especially—be delighted to see you.”

“I feel sure,” said Julia, “that she will receive me warmly.”

“I need not describe to you the joy she will experience, because you know how dearly she loves you. I will write to let them know that we shall be there about eight, and that intelligence will be received with rapture. And now, my beloved one, let me conjure you to bear the annoyance, of which we have spoken, with a tranquil spirit. View the step we are about to take, in connexion only with the happiness to which it will lead. Consider that nature sanctions that step—that it is sanctioned by reason, religion, and love! My Julia!” he added, with an expression of fervour, “my dear, my own Julia! I am unwilling, most unwilling to leave you, my love, and yet I fear to detain you longer now. To-morrow we meet again, dear girl, and then we thus part no more. Adieu! Heaven bless you! You will meet me soon after eleven?”

“I will.”

“Once more adieu, my noble girl. All will be well. Adieu.”

He then, with feelings of ecstasy, left her; and having placed another sovereign in the hand of the servant, he quitted the park by the nearest gate, took a cab, and proceeded at once to Mildmay’s residence.

On his arrival he found Mildmay in his study with Mary, and explained to them, as briefly as possible, the substance of all that had occurred.

“But dear me,” cried Mary, “did you say to-morrow?”

“To-morrow at eleven,” replied Maitland.

“But how can it be done? There’s no time to have a dress made or anything!”

“Any dress will do,” rejoined Maitland. “That which you now wear will do very well.”

“Oh! I couldn’t dream of such a thing. I *must* look a *little* like a bridesmaid! Suppose,” she added, turning to Mildmay, “suppose I put on my French grey, dear. That’s a *very* pretty dress—the one, you know, with the three deep flounces, shall I wear that?”

“Wear any dress you please, my dear,” replied Mildmay.

“Then that shall be the one. Miss Storr will wear a white veil, of *course*, Colonel Cartwright?”

“Upon my word I don’t know,” replied Maitland.

“I should say not,” said Mildmay, “seeing that that might excite some suspicion.”

“Well, then, as I’ve two beauties, I’ll wear one myself, and take the other with me for her. She must look a *little* like a bride, of course! But oh! how I love an elopement! It is so exciting—so nice! There,

I'd rather elope fifty times than be married in the regular way once!"

"Well," said Mildmay, as he and Maitland smiled, "as the marriage is to take place to-morrow, we have no time to lose. The license must be in the first place procured, and for that we must go to Doctors' Commons."

"We can obtain it without difficulty, I believe?" inquired Maitland.

"Oh yes: you'll find it regarded as a mere matter of business."

"I should dearly like to go with you," said Mary.

"There is, I presume," observed Maitland, "no objection to the presence of a lady?"

"None," replied Mildmay, "that I know of; although I believe it to be unusual."

"Oh, but do let me go, there's a dear!" rejoined Mary. "I should love to see how it's all done."

"Well," returned Mildmay, "then put on your things. We had better start at once, Colonel Cartwright."

"If you please," replied Maitland. "But before we go I have to reveal to you a secret, which I find need not have been kept from you at all. I have already explained to you that in India I was injured by Colonel Storr, who, in consequence, never forgave me."

"You have."

"Well, so certain was I that if the colonel discovered my attachment to Julia, he would endeavour by all the means at his command to prevent our marriage, and so apprehensive did I feel that my name might inadvertently be mentioned in his presence, that I conceived myself justified in adopting an assumed name in order that all might be secure."

"And very right too," observed Mary. "Such fathers deserve to be deceived. I've no patience with them, for my part. You did very right."

"Then your name is not Cartwright?" said Mildmay.

"No; my real name is Maitland."

"Is Miss Storr aware of that?"

"She is not. I will, however, tell her as soon as we meet to-morrow, and explain to her the cause of its having been concealed."

"It would have been as well, I think, had you explained it all to her this morning."

"I wish now that I had; but I felt afraid to do so, well knowing that if, through inadvertence, she were to mention my name before her father, he would instantly suspect all, and mar our mutual happiness."

"I don't think," said Mary, "that she'd have done that; but it's always best to be on the safe side, isn't it, dear?"

"It certainly is," replied Mildmay, "always best, as you say, to be

on the safe side ; but the question is, will not Miss Storr regard the act not only as a deception, but as an absolute proof of want of confidence ?”

“ Oh, she’ll forgive him !” cried Mary. “ She’ll forgive him !”

“ I’d better,” said Maitland, who saw at a glance that Mildmay was dissatisfied, “ I’d better see her again in the course of the day, and explain it all to her at once.”

“ Do so,” said Mildmay ; “ take my advice and do so.”

“ I will,” replied Maitland. “ If possible, I will. I regret now that I suffered it to go so far. I am glad that you have placed the thing in its proper light, because if you had not, my very anxiety to keep the secret till the last might have been fatal to my fondest hopes, and I have no hesitation in confessing to you that I would not lose her for the world !”

“ Of course you must in any case have told her,” said Mary, “ before you went to church. You wouldn’t have been married in the name of Cartwright ?”

“ Most certainly not.”

“ Well, then, William’s quite right. If you’d driven it off till the last, it *might* have come too suddenly upon her.”

“ He is perfectly correct. I see it clearly now. All that I was afraid of was, that she might, under the circumstances, have been off her guard.”

“ Exactly. Oh ! I understand. But what a pity it is that these secrets are requisite : what a pity it is that fathers have not the happiness of their daughters more at heart. They ought to be ashamed of themselves. I’ve no patience with such tyranny. Look at the general—just look at him !”

“ He’ll be a father to Georgiana yet,” observed Maitland ; I’m sure of it. This marriage will bring about their reconciliation. I shall apply to him at once ; and I know that I can prevail upon him to intercede for Julia ; and if he be, as I feel convinced that he will be, successful, he cannot, with any show of reason or consistency, refuse to follow the colonel’s example.”

“ Of course,” said Mildmay, “ *he* knows that your name is Maitland ?”

“ Of course. He also knows my object in assuming the name of Cartwright.”

“ Oh !” exclaimed Mildmay, who felt much relieved. “ Very good. Then I think, with you, that this marriage *is* very likely to bring about a reconciliation between them.”

“ I have not the slightest doubt of it.”

“ Oh ! that alters the case materially. Well, run away, Mary, and put on your things, and then we’ll be off to the City at once.”

Had Maitland not given this assurance that his real name was known to the general, Mildmay would have proceeded no further in

the business, for his mind began to teem with suspicion; but on being informed that the general not only knew that his name was Maitland, but was cognizant of the object for which the name of Cartwright had been assumed, his suspicions immediately vanished, and he resolved on rendering all the assistance in his power.

When, therefore, Mary was ready, they started for Doctors' Commons; and, having procured the license—which was granted, as Mildmay had stated that it would be, as a mere matter of business—they returned to Mildmay's residence, and had an early dinner, with the view of giving Maitland an opportunity of speaking to Julia that evening on the subject of his name.

Maitland, however, had no such intention. He had represented to them that Julia would, in all probability, take an evening walk, and thus afford him an opportunity of explaining all: but if any such opportunity had been afforded, he would not have embraced it. His object was to defer the explanation until they had entered the church; conceiving that she would then be indisposed to reflect, and that, if even she were not, she would then have no time to reflect deeply.

Instead, therefore, of going direct to his lodgings, on leaving Mildmay—whom he had promised to see again in the course of the evening, and who had promptly undertaken to arrange with the clergyman in the interim—he went to an hotel, and there remained till nearly nine, when he returned with an expression of sorrow.

"Unfortunate!" he exclaimed, as he entered the room in which Mildmay and Mary were having coffee. "Very, very unfortunate."

"Why, what has occurred?" inquired Mildmay, anxiously.

"I cannot see her," replied Maitland.

"Is that all?" cried Mary.

"She has not been out of the house."

"Well, it isn't surprising," said Mildmay. "She has doubtless been making some few preparations. We must do the best we can in the morning. I wish that you *had* seen her, certainly; but, as it is, we must make the best of it we can."

"I thought, when you entered the room," said Mary, "that all had been discovered, which *would* have been vexing. As to anything else, we can manage all that."

"Well," said Mildmay, "I've seen the clergyman."

"There's a good fellow. I thank you."

"We have arranged to meet at the church precisely at half-past eleven."

"That is excellent!—the very time. Did he make any particular inquiries?"

"Oh, no. They seldom do. It is the same with them as with the people at Doctors' Commons: they view it as a mere matter of business."

"Then, he didn't appear to know Julia's name?"

"He didn't appear to me to take the slightest notice of it."

"Good. And now, how about the carriage? Had I better go and order it to-night?"

"Oh no: there'll be plenty of time for that in the morning. These fellows don't require much notice. What sort of a carriage do you mean to have?"

"Why, I should like to have the best I can get—with four horses, of course?"

"Well, shall we go at once and see what we *can* get?"

"I think that we had better."

"Well, it's rather late; but let us go, and then the thing will be settled."

They accordingly went and engaged a carriage—one which suited Maitland's views exactly—and when they had given directions for it to be at Mildmay's door at half-past ten in the morning, they returned and had supper with Mary, who asked so many questions which had to be answered, and made such an infinite variety of suggestions having reference to the proceedings of the morrow, that it was one o'clock when Maitland rose to leave.

Having reached his lodgings, he perceived a light in Julia's room, and stood at the window and watched, but no one appeared to be stirring. For some time he stood and thought of happiness and love; but as the stillness which prevailed turned the current of his thoughts, and caused him to look within himself; he soon left the window, made an effort to check reflection, drank a glass of brandy, and went to bed.

Julia, who was sitting at her dressing-table, rapt in a reverie, remained up long after that, knowing not, even then, how to proceed, fearing to take the step proposed—yet inclining still to confide in him, by whom she believed she was fondly beloved. There she sat—imagination's slave!—bewildered by myriads of teeming thoughts; and there she continued to sit until exhaustion prompted her to put out the light.

But although she retired with a view to sleep, sleep lingered behind a cloud of fancies. She wept, and then reproached herself for weeping; and then wept again; and continued to weep until she sank into a fitful slumber, in which she remained until seven o'clock, when she rose, pale, nervous, and languid in the extreme.

Maitland, who had engaged to breakfast with Mildmay and Mary, rose about the same time, and having dressed himself with unusual care, sent for a coach, and left at once with his luggage.

Julia saw him leave, and trembled; but the aristocratic character of his appearance, his manly form, and *distingué* air, soon enabled her to recover her self-possession.

On his arrival at Mildmay's, he found Mary dressed for the day;

and the taste she displayed—it must in justice to her be stated—surpassed in point of purity all her former efforts.

“Oh!” she exclaimed, as he took her hand, “I am in such spirits!—you can’t think what spirits I’m in.”

“I am happy to hear it,” said Maitland.

“I know,” she continued—“I know that we shall have a happy day, for I dreamt last night about mackerel!”

“And what,” inquired Mildmay, with a smile—“what does mackerel indicate, Mary?”

“Joy, always: nothing but joy! Money and mice are horrid! But come,” she added, “we’ve no time to lose. Breakfast is *quite* ready. William, dear; ring the bell, there’s a love—hard!”

They then sat down to breakfast, and Mary let her vivid imagination loose; but Maitland, as the time approached, became far more anxious than gay.

“Well, you *are* a bridegroom!” cried Mary, at length. “You really look as if you were going to a funeral. Come, cheer up! For goodness’ *sake* look a little lively.”

Maitland tried to do so, but failed. His anxiety increased as the time drew near; and when, at half-past ten, the carriage came to the door, his forehead was covered with cold perspiration. He endeavoured, however, to conceal this faintness as much as possible, and drank off two glasses of brandy; after which, he somewhat rallied; and when the trunks had been secured, and Mary had announced herself perfectly ready, they entered the carriage and started.

Having arrived at the corner of the street, at which he had ordered the postboys to stop, Maitland, in order that it might appear to them that he had been to fetch Julia from home, alighted. It was then just eleven, and as he approached the shop he kept his eye firmly fixed upon the door, and panted with anxiety for her appearance. He passed; and as he did so, he looked in eagerly—but Julia was not to be seen. He crossed over the road with his watch in his hand, and walked to and fro on the opposite side—still Julia did not appear!

“Can her courage have failed her?” at length he exclaimed. “*Can* she have resolved upon blasting my hopes? Patience!” he added, looking again at his watch. “It is but ten minutes past, now. She may come yet! She *will* come: surely she will: ‘I will,’ were her parting words.”

Again he walked anxiously to and fro, and again and again held the watch to his ear; and when the minute-hand had reached the quarter, he exclaimed, “Now she will not come at all!”

He had, however, scarcely uttered this exclamation, when he saw her leave the shop,—and his heart leaped with rapture. All apprehension fled at once. He was, indeed, “himself again,” and instantly approached her.



"Julia!" he exclaimed, as he took her trembling hand with an expression of ecstasy. "You are, indeed, a noble girl!"

"I have kept my word," said Julia, timidly; "but duty and inclination have had a severe conflict. Nor is the struggle yet over," she added, as Maitland drew her arm in his. "I fear, even now—although I feel that in you I may with safety confide."

"My dearest girl," interrupted Maitland, "you will have reason to *bless* the day on which confidence overcame fear. Here is our carriage," he added, as they approached it. "Mr. and Mrs. Mildmay are most anxious to see you."

Julia, who was still extremely tremulous, walked with him to the carriage—the door of which was opened instantly—and when he had presented her to Mildmay and Mary, and handed her gracefully in, he told the postboy to drive to St. George's, Hanover-square, and then seated himself by her side.

The first thing which Mary did when Julia had entered the carriage was to give her a kiss—a lingering kiss, or rather a series of kisses—which Julia, who appreciated affection, returned; and the next was to ransack her satin bag, at the bottom of which was the white lace veil—one of the "two beauties" mentioned before.

"Now," said Mary, when this treasure had been found, "you look *very* nice—you look charming—but you *must* look a little like a bride! Allow me just to tie this on your bonnet. There, now you look like a bride, indeed! Primrose gloves, dear! Fie, you mustn't wear primrose gloves! Primrose gloves to be married in! Here's a pair of white ones; just try them on, dear. You'll find them a little too large, I dare say; but coloured gloves are out of all character!"

Julia looked at her for a moment and smiled; and then, pressing her hand warmly, kissed her again.

"I appreciate your affectionate kindness," she observed, and instantly burst into tears.

"What! tears?" cried Mary; "oh! this will never do! Did I shed tears, dear?" she added, turning to Mildmay: "did I shed tears on our marriage day, William?"

"I think that you did," replied Mildmay, smiling; "in fact, I *know* that you did."

"Well, dear, if I *did*, you ought not to expose me! It's rude—very rude. I don't know how it is, but husbands *do* take extraordinary liberties. You can't imagine, my dear," she added, turning to Julia, "you really can't *imagine* how rude they become."

Julia again smiled, but it was a smile of sadness: she appreciated Mary's anxiety to raise her spirits, but felt still extremely depressed.

"My Julia," said Maitland, "I have to crave your forgiveness;

but as I cannot state my offence here — being scarcely able to hear *myself* speak calmly—I must defer it until we get to church.”

“I know what it is,” cried Mary, “I know; and if I were you, dear, I’d scold him well. Isn’t it Shakspeare, William, who says, ‘A rose by any other name would smell as sweet?’”

“What may you mean?” inquired Julia; but before she was able to ascertain, the carriage stopped at the church, and they immediately proceeded to alight.

Julia, however—still anxious to have her question answered—had no sooner passed the portal than she stopped, and clinging to Maitland’s arm, said, “Frederick, what have you now to explain?”

“My dear girl,” replied Maitland, “be not alarmed: it is a matter of no importance whatever. You have frequently, Julia, urged me to consent to my name being mentioned to your father. I anticipated this, and fearing that it might be, if not with a view to reconciliation, inadvertently mentioned, I assumed the name of Cartwright—”

“Assumed the name of Cartwright?”

“My real name is Maitland, Julia.”

“Now, dear,” cried Mary, “ought he not to be scolded? The idea of Georgiana, too, being so sly. She said in her letters to me that Colonel Cartwright, instead of Colonel Maitland, would call. If I were you, dear, I wouldn’t forgive him for an hour. But see,” she added, “the minister is waiting. We’ll scold him by-and-by.”

Julia hesitated; but Mildmay—whose calm, expressive countenance was plainly indicative of an honourable mind—perceiving this, drew her arm in his and succeeded, before they reached the vestry, in subduing the apprehensions she had inspired.

It was then quite clear to Maitland that he had pursued the right course to secure her: he felt perfectly convinced that if the deception he had practised had been explained to her before, inquiries would have been instituted, which must have led to the destruction of his hopes.

The preliminaries having been arranged, they proceeded to the altar, and when the ceremony had been most impressively performed, they returned to the vestry, attached their signatures to the register, took leave of the clergyman, and left the church.

Julia—except, indeed, when it was necessary for her to assist in the ceremony—was silent during the whole of this time. She wept freely, and Maitland—who, before they left the vestry, took Mildmay by the hand and said, “I owe you much”—felt certain that had it not been for *his* interposition, Julia’s hesitation would have been fatal to his views, inasmuch as she would not have approached the altar.

The die was, however, now cast; and on their return to the carriage, both Mildmay and Mary assisted him in dispelling from Julia’s

mind that sadness which the deception, even more than the fact of her having married clandestinely, had engendered.

"Now," said Mary, when they had reached the New-road, with the view of proceeding through Hackney, "now we have got off those rattling stones we shall be able to hear ourselves speak with some comfort. In the first place, Mrs. Colonel Maitland, allow me to congratulate you on your marriage. In the next," she continued, having kissed her affectionately, "let me suggest to you the propriety of formally forgiving that naughty man opposite. I know," she added, as Julia at once extended her hand, which Maitland seized and pressed to his lips eagerly, "I know very well what he'll say—he'll say that love was the cause of his assuming the name of Cartwright—that he wouldn't have done so, if he hadn't loved you dearly—and so on; but I mean to say that it was very wicked of him, and that if love really did tell him to do it, Love was a very naughty boy."

Maitland and Mildmay smiled, and so did Julia—but very faintly—when Mary, thus encouraged, resumed:—

"I have somewhere read, that 'Men were deceivers ever,' and I don't know how it is, but in matters of love these little deceptions are thought nothing of."

"But we are not the only deceivers!" suggested Maitland.

"I am aware of it: for instance, Georgiana deceived her aunt; and you," she added, turning to Julia, "have deceived that unfortunate servant of yours, who is now waiting outside the shop. Now what is that unhappy individual doing? I'll tell you: I know as well as if he were now this moment before me. There he is with his gold-headed cane to his nose, peeping and wondering why you don't come out, and asking himself a great number of questions, and answering himself in the most satisfactory manner he can. 'What *can* she be after?' That's the first question. 'What in the world is she about?' is the next. 'Is she buying all the goods in the shop?' is the third; and then he goes on 'I wonder they're not tired of waiting upon her. The idea of ladies having such fancies. Perhaps she'll only spend a few shillings after all! or perhaps she is going to be married to that gentleman who meets her in the park, and is laying in a whole stock of things: I shouldn't wonder. At any rate, I wish she'd come out for I'm sick *and* tired of waiting.' Presently he'll give an extraordinary look in, and fancy he sees you in the distance, and then he'll sit down on the bench and go to sleep, and when at length he awakes and ascertains that you are gone, he'll run home as fast as his legs can carry him, dreadfully impressed with the awful conviction that you left the shop while he was sleeping."

The most subtle sophism enforced by the most brilliant eloquence could not have relieved the mind of Julia so much as did this shrewd conception of Mary. Being naturally light-hearted, Julia not only smiled, but absolutely laughed with the rest; and as Maitland an

Mildmay enlarged upon it with excellent tact and effect, almost every indication of sadness disappeared.

At Epping they stopped to change horses and have lunch; and when an hour had elapsed—during which every possible effort was made to inspire Julia with the spirit of gaiety—they re-entered the carriage, which Maitland had engaged to take them through—and pursued their journey, with the intention of stopping at the Crown, at Chesterford, to dine.

As Maitland—fearing that Julia might feel fatigued—had directed the postboys to drive as fast as possible, the distance between Epping and Chesterford—about thirty miles—was accomplished—notwithstanding they changed twice—in somewhat less than two hours and a half.

It was then half-past four, and Maitland ordered at once the best dinner that could be produced by five; and considering the shortness of the notice given, the dinner that was served up was really superb.

To the delight, not of Maitland alone, but also of Mildmay and Mary, Julia appeared to enjoy it highly. The change of air and lively society—to which she had not for some time been accustomed—had given her an excellent appetite, and as nothing having a tendency to banish serious thoughts was neglected, her mind was relieved from that accumulative burden by which it had been so grievously oppressed.

They had then about sixteen miles to go, and at half-past six they left the Crown, calculating that before eight o'clock Georgiana and Julia would be in each other's arms. Nor was this calculation incorrect: the clock had not struck when they reached the Box, to the door of which, as they dashed up the path, Georgiana, with Tom and Todd, flew to receive them.

"Julia!" exclaimed Georgiana.

"Georgiana!" cried Julia, as she sprang from the carriage. "Oh! how delighted I am to see you," she added, and instantly fell upon her neck and wept.

"Send I may live!" cried Tom. "I say, colonel. Well, never mind," he added, as Maitland supported Julia. "I'll have a word or two with you presently. What, Mildmay! Well; if I ain't glad to see you, no mortal flesh was ever glad to see flesh yet. And Polly, how are you?—Eh? Populor. Here; I needn't ask you. I *never* saw you look more spicy in my life! *Come in.*"

"I *hope* you are well?" said Mildmay, taking Todd's hand.

"What d'you think of him—eh?" cried Tom. "What *can* you think? Don't he look stunning? He's got a new suit on. Flesh won't know him by-and-by."

"Tommy," said Todd,—"*Tommy*, don't be too fast."

"Well, you know it's a fact, you know. Since you've been a nob, royal blood can't come anywhere near you. But, I say," he added,

turning to Mildmay, "where did you get these tits from? Chesterford Crown?"

"Yes: the carriage we brought from London."

"Harry, help these men to take the horses out, and then give 'em something to eat and drink. Don't make 'em beastly!—mind you that. Now let's go in and have a jovial glass of wine."

They accordingly entered the parlour, and found that Georgiana and Julia had retired; but Maitland immediately drew Tom aside and said, "I want to speak to you in private."

"All right," replied Tom, "I'll just set the wine going, and then we can cut out together. Now then," he added, "here you are: make yourself at home. I'll give you the health of the bride and bridegroom to begin with."

The wine passed round; and Tom, perceiving that Maitland was anxious to speak to him, said, "Now then, we'd better go and settle with these men."

Maitland rose on the instant, and followed Tom, who at once inquired what he had to say.

"I scarcely know," replied Maitland, "how to explain the matter to you, because I've been slightly deceiving you all."

"What about?" inquired Tom.

"Why, I was so fearful of losing Julia, and at the same time so certain that if I paid my addresses to her in my own name I *should* lose her, that in order that it might not by any chance be mentioned in the presence of her father, I assumed the name of Cartwright."

"Well, that is your name, isn't it?"

"No."

"Then what is it?"

"My real name is Maitland: Colonel Maitland."

"Maitland? Why, the general addressed you as Colonel Cartwright."

"*He* knows all about it. He knows that that name was assumed for a purpose. He knows that my real name is Maitland."

"Well! but you don't mean to say that you've been such a fool as to marry in any other name than your own?"

"No. I explained all to Julia before we were married."

"Very *good*; and you were married, of course, in your real name?"

"Of course! but as Julia imagines that you knew that I had but *assumed* the name of Cartwright, you need not at present undeceive her."

"Oh! I'll carry it on as a capital joke!"

"And Mrs. Todd—"

"Oh, I'll put her up to it. Why didn't you tell me before? It may all have been blown by this time. However, do you remain here, and I'll go up and speak to her about it."

He then ran up-stairs, and cried—"George! George!"

"Yes, dear," replied Georgiana.

"I want you a minute, old girl. Just come here."

Georgiana immediately met him on the stairs, when he whispered—"I've got a little secret to tell you. The colonel—whose real name is Maitland—"

"So I understand!" interposed Georgiana.

"Oh! you do, do you! Well, keep up the joke. It's all right: I know all about it. The general's in it as well. Keep it up."

"I must speak to you, Tom dear, more *seriously* on the subject."

"Very well; but keep it up."

"Where is Mary?"

"In the parlour."

"Why does she not join us?"

"I'll ask," replied Tom, who returned to Maitland; and having assured him that all was right, they re-entered the parlour together.

"Mrs. Mildmay," said Tom, with an assumption of unexampled politeness, "I have to present to you the compliments of two trumps up-stairs, which are anxious to ascertain why you don't join 'em."

"Mr. Todd," replied Mary, assuming the same style as that which Tom had assumed, "I imagined that those ladies might wish to have a little conversation in private."

"Not a bit of it!" returned Tom; "not a ha'porth of it! Therefore, if you know any just cause or impediment why you shouldn't join 'em, you are now to go up and declare it."

Mary curtsied profoundly, and left the room at once.

"Now," said Tom, "let's have a glass of champagne, and spend an hour or two popular and spicy. Governor! just touch the tinkler will you? There's a brick! Well," he added, turning to Maitland, "so you've got her, eh? Well, I'm glad of it. She's one which 'll answer your purpose, I know. She's a trump! every inch of her! and nothing but a trump! But I say, didn't you tell her what your name was till this very morning?"

"Not till we got to church," replied Maitland; "I was afraid—"

"What!" cried Todd, with a most mysterious aspect.

"You're not up to it, governor."

"Up to what, Tommy?"

"Why, up to the dodge! You didn't know that the colonel's name was Maitland, instead of Cartwright!"

"Maitland, instead of Cartwright! Hold hard a bit! What do you mean?"

"Why, he was so afeard of losing her, which is his wife, and which would have been prevented from marrying of him, if Colonel Storr had known he'd been *after* her, that he thought the best plan would be to take the name of Cartwright, in order that his real name mightn't be mentioned."

"Well; but the general—"

"The general was up to it! He knew all about it!"

"Oh!" said Todd, thoughtfully. "Ah!"

"The course I have pursued," observed Maitland, "may appear at first sight to be unjustifiable; but when you reflect upon the fact that if my name had been mentioned in the presence of Storr, he would have suspected all, and spoilt all, I think you will admit that I was justified in acting as I have done, with a view to gain her whom I would not have lost for the world."

"Of course!" cried Tom: "as a matter of course! Now this is what I call champagne! Just try it. The biter's bit, and it serves him right. He's an artful card, and always was. I say, governor, don't you remember when he wanted to send me clean out of the country to learn the foreign languages, eh?"

"I do," replied Todd. "Yes, Tommy, I do: I remember it well."

"Don't you remember how I was to be polished up, and made a man of uncommon strong mind and large notions? We did him then, and I'm glad he's done now: such a man as that ought to be done like a dinner. I say it now, although I wouldn't think of saying it before Mrs. Maitland, that he ain't worth a single individual thought! Now, governor, pass the bottle: you're dreaming: that's about the bottom of it! Give us a toast; come, let's have a good 'un."

"Gentlemen," said Todd, as he slowly rose, "I'll give you, with pleasure, the health of the bride."

"Bravo!" cried Tom. "That's popular."

"I hope," continued Todd, "that although she didn't know what her name was to be till this mornin', it won't, in the long run, make any sort of odds."

"Not a bit of it!" cried Tom. "What odds can it make?"

"May she," resumed Todd, "be happy: may she find she's got a husband, which 'ill answer her purpose—one which 'ill allus be affectionate and kind—one which 'ill allus act upright and just—one which 'ill cherish and love her till death. She's a good sort: I know she is: an out-and-out sort. Georgiana and she is a couple which ought to have every joy upon earth. I therefore give you her health! Long life to her, and happiness, and peace, and joy, and comfort, and every other individual blessin' under heaven."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Tom, "very much bravo! Send I may live! I say, Mildmay; what do you think of that—eh? What do you think of that? It's *stunning* how he's come out since he's been a retired nob! That was none so dusty—eh?"

"An excellent speech," replied Mildmay; and when the toast had been duly honoured, Maitland rose and said—

"My friends, I beg of you to believe that I appreciate highly the compliment you have just paid my amiable wife; and I cannot on this occasion do better than respond to the wishes expressed by my excellent friend opposite—whose warm heart we all know to be in the right place—by assuring you that she *shall* find that she *has* a husband who will be to her all that a husband *should* be."

"Good!" cried Tom, "that's out-and-out!"

"I am aware," resumed Maitland, "that the fact of my having concealed my name from her *may* be considered dishonourable—"

"Not a bit of it," cried Tom. "Oh, that's nothing!"

"Whether it be so considered or not," continued Maitland—"whether the practice of deception, in any shape, be in matters of love deemed venial or not—I have felt it so acutely, that henceforth no consideration upon earth shall induce me to commit an act bearing even the semblance of dishonour. I will not, however, dwell upon this. I thank you most heartily for the exceedingly kind feeling which you have manifested towards her in whom all my earthly hopes are centred, and before I sit down, I will do myself the pleasure of proposing to you the health of Mrs. Todd, whose amiable character need not here be described, and whom you know to be worthy of the world's esteem."

"Now look here," said Tom, who rose at once, "just look here. Now I don't understand this: look here. Here's the colonel been cutting away about dishonour. Now what does he mean?—because I can't brain it. Does he mean to mean that there's any dishonour in a little deception in matters of this sort? Because if there is, you know, I'm one of the most dishonourable swells that ever lived; and the governor's another. Look here: How did Georgiana and me come together? Wasn't it entirely by deception? Didn't I deceive the general and Colonel Storr, and didn't the governor advise me to deceive 'em, and didn't Georgiana deceive 'em too? What do you mean? Should we ever have come together if we hadn't deceived 'em? And would you and Miss Storr—Mrs. Maitland which is now—would you and her ever have come together if it hadn't been for this deception? Very well then: what's the good of cutting away about dishonour? There ain't a mite in it. You didn't do it to take advantage of her. You did it because you loved her!—you did it to make her happy—and you're no more the worse for deceiving the colonel, than I'm the worse for deceiving the general, or the governor's the worse for recommending me to do it. That's my sentiments. It's all a pack of stuff. We oughtn't to think about such rubbish. And now, as you have drank the health of a trump, which is as dear to me as the other is to you—"

"We haven't drank it yet," cried Todd. "We haven't drank it yet."



"No more we haven't: here's George's good health, God bless her! she's a brick! And now then, I say for the honour you've done her, I drink all your jovial good healths in return."

"There is," said Maitland, "another lady, to whom I am much indebted, whose kindness to-day I shall never forget, and whose health I shall now feel great pleasure in proposing: I mean Mrs. Mildmay, whose affectionate attention to my Julia, under the circumstances, I cannot appreciate too highly."

"Bravo!" cried Tom. "She's a good sort too. Here's the jovial good health of Mrs. Mildmay!"

Mildmay briefly acknowledged the toast; and as Maitland expressed a wish to see how the ladies were getting on, he and Tom, at the suggestion of Todd, left the room.

"Now," said Todd, when he and Mildmay were alone, "what do you think of this business? I can't say that *I* like the look of it at all. What's he done to this Colonel Storr, to make him so inveterate?"

"He says that the colonel injured him in India, and therefore has never forgiven him."

"Well, supposing they couldn't come to terms: what did he want to conceal his name from her for?"

"He says that he was afraid that she might inadvertently mention it in the presence of her father."

"It isn't likely—it isn't *like* anything likely that she would. But if even he *was* afraid—if even we admit that he was justified—as he says—in keeping his real name from her—what did he want to keep it from *us* for? Why did he pass himself off under a false name here?"

"It appears to me," said Mildmay, "that this plan has been laid for some time—that being determined to have her, he took every *possible* precaution—"

"I don't like the look of it," interrupted Todd. "I may be wrong, and I hope I am, but I *don't* like the look of it. I've nothin'—mind you—nothin' to say against him. He bears a capital character at the White Hart, and since I've known him he's allus acted upright and down straight, and every way like a perfect gentleman. I've no fault to find with him at all—not a mite: he's allus been candid, straightforrard, and correct, and yet, for all that, I *don't* like the look of it!"

"Doesn't it strike you as being somewhat strange that the general should be in the secret?"

"That's another point. Yes, it does look very strange."

"It is, I suppose, quite true that he *is*?"

"I can prove it. I've a note in the general's own handwriting, in which he addresses him plain 'Dear Cartwright.'"

"Then I think that I can see through it all."

"Well, I know you're a man o' the world; I know you're a man which has studied human natur'; I know you're an honourable man, which wouldn't mix yourself up with anything dirty if you knew it, and therefore I should like to hear what you really think."

"Then I'll explain. Colonel Maitland was enamoured of this young lady—"

"That is to say, he was in love with her?"

"Yes."

"I understand."

"Well, the general—being a friend of his—knew that he was in love with her; and knew, moreover, that Colonel Storr would never consent to the match."

"Very good. I allus like to hear you speak, because there's allus some sense in what you say."

"Well, the general, knowing this, doubtless, advised Maitland to assume another name, in order that by gaining this young lady's affections and marrying her without her father's consent, Colonel Storr might be placed in the same position—"

"I see, I see! Capital! That's it! I see! So that one shouldn't laugh at the other! That's about it! The colonel I dare say's been laughing at the general, and this is a bit of what d'you call it—"

"A retaliation."

"Exactly. That's it. You're right, I'll bet a million, and *yet* I can't say I like the look of it at all."

"Nor did I, at first. When he explained to me that he had *assumed* the name of Cartwright I felt disinclined to assist him any further; but when I heard that the *general* was cognisant of the fact, I at once resolved on doing all in my power to promote his views, conceiving that it might be the means of effecting a reconciliation between the general and Mrs. Todd."

"And do you think that this marriage *will* have that effect?"

"I think it very probable. The colonel will come down here, of course, when he has ascertained what has taken place: he will go to the general—who, as a mutual friend, will intercede for Maitland, and recommend a reconciliation. Should he succeed—and it certainly appears to me that the chances are that he will—Maitland will at once intercede for Mrs. Todd, who, through his instrumentality—"

"I see it all now!" cried Todd. "Yes—I see it all! I know what you mean to a touch; and if it should turn out as you think it will, it'll certainly be a great comfort. I only wish it may; it looks feasible. I only wish it may. I shall be sorry if it don't, not only for Georgiana's sake, but for the sake of all concerned. I rather like Maitland, I must confess: I *do* think he's a gentleman still; and until it's proved to me that he's anything but, I shall treat him

the same as ever; still for all this—for all you've put a very fair face upon the matter—I must say, I can't help saying, there's suffen, and I don't know what, tells me to say—that I *don't* like the look of it at all! But, here they are; time 'll show. Not another word about the pig.—Well," he cried, as Tom and Maitland entered the room, "how are the petticoats?"

"Spicy," replied Tom. "Send I may live, if they ain't all as happy as birds. They only want one thing to make 'em celestial."

"And what's that, Tommy?"

"The honour of your presence. Perhaps they *ain't* been going on a little above a bit about you. Send I may live, if you don't cut us *all* out. No mortal flesh alive is anything *like* you! But I told 'em we couldn't spare you yet; so we'll have another glass or two, and be jovial. Now then, what's the next move on the board? I say, Mildmay, just tip us a stave—there's a brick!"

"Don't let's be selfish, Tommy," said Todd. "Let's have all the singin' up-stairs."

"Very well; only I thought he might get his pipe in tune. But, as you like; it makes no odds to me—not a ha'porth! Now, what's the next toast?"

"I rise," said Todd, "to propose to you the jovial good health of the bridegroom. I wish him all he can wish himself; and may our friendship last for ever."

"*Rayther* too short," said Tom; "but no matter—colonel, your jolly good health."

"I thank you from my heart," replied Maitland. "I hope that our friendship *may* be lasting: and before I resume my seat, I'll give you—health and happiness to our excellent friend who now presides over us with so much ability."

"That's better," said Tom. "That's me. That's good. And when you've done justice to that spicy toast, I'll just let you know what I mean. Now then, are you ready?"

"Hold hard, Tommy: hold hard a bit. Good health to you, Tommy. May you never want nothin'! Now then, start off again fresh."

"Gentlemen," said Tom, "I'm always glad to see you, because I somehow think you're always glad to see me."

"That ain't the ticket, Tommy: that ain't the thing," said Todd.

"Well, then, I'm always glad to see you, because I know you're bricks: there, will *that* do? You're very particular to-night. Well! I'm always glad to see you, and no mistake; but I'm more out-and-out glad to see you on such an occasion as this. Here we are, four trumps, on a wedding-day; and if we can't enjoy ourselves popular, I should like to see the four trumps which can. Now, you've drunk my good health. Very good. Now, you know, I'm not much of a

fist at a speech; but if any mortal flesh can mean more than I mean, when I say in plain terms that I thank you, I should just like to have that swell's meaning explained, so that I may mean just what he means for the future. Now, you know, there's no rubbish at all about me: you know that when I say I thank you, I mean what I say: and, as I've now said all I meant to say on the subject, I'll give you the health of our learned friend Mildmay, which is, and no mistake, one of the best and most capital fellows in flesh."

"*Well* done, Tommy. *Come*, that's none so bad," said Todd. "Not a bit of it. *Well* done!"

"Oh! we can come it sometimes," replied Tom. "But if any mortal flesh ever felt what the dictionaries call his *deficiency*, it's me."

"Gentlemen," said Mildmay, when his health had been drunk, "I thank you. Our friend Tom has alluded to his deficiency. In what is he deficient?—in feeling, spirit, honour, generosity, or warmth of heart? We all know that he is not; and if a man be not deficient in any of these qualities, accomplishments may well be dispensed with. Give me a man with a sound heart, and that man I'll prize as my friend. He has a sound heart, and hence it is that we esteem him; but as his heart cannot be more sound than that of his excellent father, I, with pleasure, propose to you the health of Mr. Todd, who is—and that in the most comprehensive sense—a man!"

"Can't come it in that style," said Tom. "Wish I could. Governor, good health. May you live till you're a million!"

"A million, Tommy!"

"Yes; and then you'll see all my kids pretty well grown up."

"Well, I dessay I should by that time," returned Todd. "But, gentlemen," he added, rising, "now you know it's no good for me to attempt to speak fine, because, if I do attempt, I'm quite safe to stick in the mud. I'll, therefore, only merely say this, that I thank you with all my soul, and wish you all happiness here and hereafter."

"Capital!" cried Tom. "*That's* none so dusty. We—Eh?" he added, as the servant gave him a note, and retired. "Hullo! Here's a go! Send I may live! Here you are! A round-robin! Shall I read it?"

"Of course," said Todd.

"Well, look out! Now, then:—'Gentlemen, we *desire* you to join us immediately.' Signed all round, 'Mary,' 'Georgiana,' and 'Julia.' Now, what do you think of that? Who'll name the ringleader? Let's have a sweep. I'll put a sovereign down upon George."

"I'll back Mary," said Mildmay.

"And I," said Maitland, "will stake upon Julia."

"I'll have a cut in with you here," said Todd.

"How can you?" cried Tom.

"Why, I'll back my opinion that you don't get at it once within an hour, and try all you know."

"Down with the tin, then. It's understood that he which wins has the four!"

"Of course."

"We'll make it five apiece if you like."

"One's enough, Tommy; we don't want to gamble. Mind: not a word to them, you know, about the pig, till time's up."

"Of course not!" cried Tom; "come along."

They then joined the ladies—who began to look particularly mysterious—and while they were having coffee, Tom, Mildmay, and Maitland endeavoured, by all the means of which they were capable, to ascertain which of them suggested the round-robin. The ladies, however—deep in the mysteries of female freemasonry—would not reveal the secret. They wish to know why the gentlemen were so *anxious* to ascertain, and as the gentlemen were not at liberty to tell them, they gloried in keeping the secret still.

"It's no use," cried Tom, at length—"not a mite in the world. The more you want 'em to tell, the more they won't. Here it only wants two minutes! Now look here," he added, "just look you here, George: it's the last time of asking; mind you that: you won't have another chance, not in time:—so you'd better make your mind up quick! Now then: *will* you tell me, or won't you, in a word?"

Georgiana laughed merrily, and Julia and Mary joined: and while they were laughing Todd claimed the stakes.

"Time's up!" he cried. "Now hand over, Tommy."

"Here you are," said Tom. "Take your tin. Send I may live, if I ain't disgusted."

"Will you, gentlemen, explain to us the meaning of all this?" enjoined Georgiana, archly.

"Explain!" cried Tom; "why, you've swindled me out of a sov."

"But how?"

"How! You ought to blush! Why we put down one apiece, and he which named the ringleader was to have the lot. I backed you; the colonel backed Mrs. Maitland; Mildmay backed Mary; and the governor backed time."

"And as," said Todd, "you *didn't* tell the secret within the hour, you're entitled to a sovereign apiece: here you are."

"What do you mean?" cried Tom.

"When I back ladies, Tommy, I never dream of pocketing the stakes."

"Well then," said Tom, holding his hand to Georgiana, "just give us my sovereign back, if you please."

"Indeed," replied Georgiana, playfully—"indeed, Mr. Tom, I shall not. You're not entitled to it: nor would have been if even the secret had been revealed. The colonel would then have been the winner."

"Georgiana!" cried Julia, "really that is too bad!"

"Oh, dear me!" said Georgiana, "what *have* I done? Well, never mind, dear," she added, archly. "It was but natural: and the colonel, I am sure, will not be at all displeased."

Maitland took Julia's hand and pressed it warmly; and as he did so, Tom cried, "Now then, Mildmay!—come, give us a song."

Mildmay consented: he went at once to the piano, and when he had sung an appropriate song, Georgiana took his place, and sang a sweet duet with Julia, when Mildmay played a favourite overture brilliantly, and thus they continued to sing and play alternately until half-past one, when Todd—whose servant was waiting for him—ordered his gig, and having kissed all the ladies, wished them joy, and bade them adieu for the night.

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## CHAPTER XXXIV

### THE PURSUIT.

MARY's conjectures, having reference to Julia's servant, proved to be nearly correct. He did remain at the door until he was tired; he did peep and wonder why she didn't come out, and although he didn't actually go to sleep, he did at length—conceiving that she must have passed him unperceived—go into the shop, and having satisfied himself that she was not there, run home in a state of mind which may be pronounced feverish.

"Bob," said he, as "Bob" opened the door, "how long has Miss Julia been home?"

"How long has she been home?" returned Bob; "why, she ain't been home at all."

"Not home?"

"No!"

"Here's a kittle o' fish!"

"What about?" inquired Bob. "What d'you mean?"

"Mean?"

The bell at this moment rang violently.

"There's missis again," cried Bob. "She's been in such a way about your being out so long."

"Is that James?" inquired Mrs. Storr, as Bob ascended the stairs.

"Yes, ma'am," said Bob; "but Miss Julia's not with him!"

"Not with him! Good Heavens! James, how is this?"

"I thought she'd come home, ma'am."

"You thought she'd come home! Why, where did you leave her?"

"At the shop, ma'am."

"What shop?"

"The linendraper's shop, ma'am; the shop she always goes to. I've been waiting at the door there, ma'am, more than four hours; and when I found that she didn't come out, I went in and found her gone."

"What *can* be the meaning of this? Run for a coach instantly! Lose not a moment! Heavens! what *can* have occurred!"

James started off with all possible speed, and when the coach arrived Mrs. Storr hastily entered.

"Tell the coachman to make his horses fly!" she cried; and when James had mounted the box, he did so.

Having arrived at the shop, she proceeded to make inquiries of the person whose business it was to see that due attention was paid to every lady that entered, but all that she could ascertain was, that Julia—of whom he had some slight knowledge—was there about eleven, and that he had not seen her since. She therefore immediately re-entered the coach, and gave instructions to be driven to the United Service Club, where she learned that the colonel had left for home, whither she instantly proceeded.

In the interim the postman left a note which Julia had hastily written that morning. It was addressed to Mrs. Storr; but as the colonel reached home first, he—recognising Julia's handwriting—at once opened it, and with an expression of amazement, read the contents, which were as follows:—

"MY DEAR MAMMA,—Be not alarmed. Before this can reach you I shall have become the beloved wife of Colonel Cartwright, whom you and papa will at once recollect as the friend of General Brooke. My reason for taking this step I will explain at length hereafter; but be assured, dear mamma, that had it not been for the unhappy misunderstanding between papa and Colonel Cartwright in India it never would have been taken. On my arrival at Newmarket I will embrace the very earliest opportunity of writing again; but pray forgive me, dearest mamma—forgive your ever affectionate,

"JULIA."

Scarcely had he read this when Mrs. Storr returned, and rushing up-stairs, exclaimed, "Where—where is Julia?"

"Gone!" replied the colonel, fiercely. "Gone off!—married!"

"Married!"

"Married."

"To whom?"

"Read this."

Mrs. Storr seized the note eagerly, and having read it, burst into tears.

"Do you remember this Cartwright?" cried the colonel.

"No, dear, no," replied Mrs. Storr.

"He's a *scoundrel*! let him be whom he may. There are several Cartwrights here," he added, referring to the Army List; "but not one of whom do I know. I knew no Cartwright in India."

"She says here that he is a friend of General Brooke."

"I know she does—I knew it. Newmarket—sixty miles—five o'clock—five hours—ten—I'll go at once!"

"Will you not let me go with you, dear?"

"No; you stop at home."

"Consider the dreadful state of suspense I shall be in. Pray, dear—*pray* let me go?"

"Get ready, then. Recollect," he added, as he rang the bell with violence, "the very moment the chaise comes I'm off."

Mrs. Storr instantly left the room; and when Bob came up, the colonel said, "Run to Smith's, and tell him to send a chaise-and-four immediately. Fly! And as you pass, tell James to come up."

James—who expected this—on being summoned, trembled; and on entering the room looked pale as death.

"Where have you been, sir?" demanded the colonel.

"Waiting outside the shop for Miss Julia, sir. She must have gone out at the other door, I'm sure!"

"There are two doors then?"

"Yes, sir: one in one street, sir, and one in the other."

"Now, who has been in the habit of meeting her in her walks?"

"No, no, no, nobody, sir, that I know of."

"What!" exclaimed the colonel, perceiving, at a glance, that he was telling a falsehood, "what! no one that you know of! Scoundrel!" he added, seizing him fiercely by the throat, "tell me the truth, or I'll strangle you!"

"I don't know him, sir. Oh! I don't know him."

"How often has he met her?"

"T—t—twice, sir."

"Where?"

"In the Park, sir."

"And when?"

"Yesterday, sir, and the day before."

"You scoundrel!" cried the colonel, as he shook him with ferocity.

"*Why* did you keep this from me? Get out of my house!"



"I hope, sir—"

"Get out!" cried the colonel; and James, in order to escape a kick aimed at him, darted from the room.

Ten minutes after this the chaise was at the door, and as Mrs. Storr had taken special care to be ready, she and the colonel entered, and taking Bob with them, they started in haste for the Hall.

As they went the same road, and stopped at the same inns to change horses, they had, of course, no difficulty in ascertaining that they were on the right scent. They inquired minutely at every inn at which they stopped, but all they could learn was, that Julia had been there, and was one of a most happy party of four.

Having, however, passed Chesterford, where they ascertained that the party had dined, they met the postboys, who had taken the carriage on to Newmarket, and stopped.

"Do you belong to Chesterford?" inquired the colonel.

"Yes, sir; we do," replied one of the postboys.

"You have been to Newmarket?"

"Yes, sir; we have."

"Did you leave the carriage there?"

"No, sir; we didn't."

"Where did you leave it?"

"At the Box, sir."

"What Box?"

"Don't know, sir: it's what they call the Box."

"Who lives there?"

"The Squire, sir."

"What Squire?"

"Don't know, sir: they call him the Squire."

"Don't you know his name?"

"No, sir; no other name, only the Squire."

"Is it Cartwright?"

"Don't know, sir. It may be."

"Well; but where is this Box?"

"Just through Newmarket, sir; anybody 'll tell you."

"Thank you!" said the colonel; and the chaise went on.

"He is evidently respectable!" observed Mrs. Storr.

"Yes," said the colonel: that appears to be *quite* clear: but who he is, I cannot imagine. I don't remember that I ever had any serious misunderstanding with any one in India. And as to the name of Cartwright!—Tut! it seems familiar, too."

"I think that I have heard the name frequently before. However, we shall soon know now. It may turn out better than we at first expected. Heaven grant it may! He may be some one of whom we in our hearts can approve: and if such be the case, we must not treat them too severely. You do not intend to go on to this Box, dear?"

"No; I shall go up to Brooke's, and ascertain who he is."

"Yes; that will be better, I think, dear: much better. I hope that he will not be in bed."

"If he be, I must have him up. But he'll not be in bed: we shall be there in another hour."

At eleven o'clock they reached the Hall; and the general, who heard the chaise rattle up the path, came down, wondering who had arrived.

"What!" he exclaimed, when he saw Colonel Storr. "Why, how's this? Has anything occurred?"

"Yes," replied the colonel. "I'll tell you all about it directly."

The general then assisted Mrs. Storr to alight; and, as Mrs. Brooke had by this time appeared, the ladies went up-stairs together.

"Well," said the general, having entered the first room he came to, "now, in the first place, Storr, what has happened?"

"Do you know a Colonel Cartwright?"

"Cartwright!" cried the general, who started at the question. "Why do you ask?"

"Do you *know* him?"

"I know a fellow who *assumes* the name of Cartwright."

"A fellow who *assumes* the name! Did you know him in India?"

"Yes; and you knew him, too."

"Who is he?"

"You recollect Maitland?—Lieutenant Maitland?"

"Ten thousand devils seize him!" cried the colonel, vehemently.

"Why, what has he been doing?"

"What has he been doing! Oh, Brooke!" he added, pressing his temples, and trembling with rage, "I shall go raving mad!"

"But what *has* he been up to?"

"Brooke! he has compassed the destruction of my daughter!"

"Seduced her?"

"Married her!"

"The devil he has!"

"They were married this morning, and are now near here, at a place which they call the Squire's Box."

"The Squire's Box? And whom do you think they call the Squire?"

"I know not; nor do I now care to know."

"The Squire is *my* daughter's husband!"

"Is it possible? What! Then your daughter and her husband have brought this about."

"Oh! I should not be at all surprised."

"But, good God, Brooke, how came he to know them?"

"Oh! he's been down here some time."

"And what has he been doing?"

"Oh! carrying on his old game."

"Destruction! How far is this infernal place from here?"

"About two miles."

"Then lend me a horse."

"Why, surely you do not think of going to-night?"

"I'll go at once."

"For what purpose?"

"For the purpose of rescuing her from that wretch."

"Are you mad?"

"I *am*—nearly."

"You *must* be, Storr, to think of taking such a step. How can you rescue her? How can it be done? Suppose you were to go to-night, *can* you imagine that they would allow you to see her?"

"But I *would* see her."

"How could you? How could you get in, if they felt, as they would feel, disposed to keep you out? No, Storr, no: the thing is done; and now you must endeavour to follow that advice which you gave *me*, under precisely similar circumstances. But how did you ascertain that they were married?"

"Here's her note," replied the colonel, who continued to pace the room with a most ferocious aspect—"read it."

The general took the note, and having glanced at it, exclaimed, "*My* friend, indeed! But I see how it is: he has made use of me to entrap her."

"Of course."

"Well, well," said the general, thoughtfully, "it's of *no* use. It's done. Come, you must feel fatigued; come and have some refreshment. We'll talk the matter over again by-and-by."

"Fathers!" cried the colonel, "this, *this* is your reward! Having reared your children tenderly and guarded them with care—having fondled them, cherished them, loved, nay, adored them—their gratitude is, to blast your hopes and wring your very heartstrings."

"You feel it," said the general, who recollected how calm the colonel was when Georgiana eloped. "You feel it now as a father—*before* you felt it only as a man."

While they were thus engaged, the ladies were conversing, of course, on the same subject, but in a totally different strain: for having ascertained what had occurred, Mrs. Brooke—who had heard so much in favour of Maitland from Georgiana, exclaimed—"Well, thank Heaven, it's no worse."

"Then you know this Colonel Cartwright well?" said Mrs. Storr.

"Why, we both must have known him in India, although I cannot for the life of me recollect him now."

"Does he not then visit you now?"

"We have but few visitors here," replied Mrs. Brooke, mourn-

fully. "All that, however, I will explain by-and-by. He and the general are frequently together; but it is from Georgiana I have learned that he is a most gentleman-like, amiable person."

"*She* knows him, then?"

"Oh, he is constantly there."

"Where does Georgiana live?"

"At a sweet little place, about two miles from here, called the Box."

"The Box! Why, that is where Julia's gone!"

"Indeed!"

"The Squire's Box?"

"Yes."

"How extraordinary, yet how fortunate, that she has not fallen into other hands. Oh! what a relief this is to my mind. I feel almost reconciled now. Then you see Georgiana occasionally?"

"Yes. But not with the general's sanction. Do not to him say a word on the subject; but we shall be able to see them both to-morrow?"

"Indeed! How?"

"I'll manage it. Leave it to me. In the morning I'll send a private communication to Georgiana, and then you and I will go out for a drive. Colonel Cartwright will, in all probability, meet us with them, and then we shall recognise him, doubtless, at once. He has been described to me as a most handsome man; kind, generous, and highly intellectual!"

This description so perfectly accorded with that of the various landladies of whom Mrs. Storr had made inquiries along the road, that she felt already reconciled to the match, and, therefore, when the colonel entered the room in which she and Mrs. Brooke had been thus conversing, she approached him with an expression of gaiety, and said, "Come, it is not so bad after all."

"*That* is not so bad?" demanded the colonel.

"Why, my dear, it appears that Colonel Cartwright is—"

"A blackleg!—a swindler!—an impostor!" cried the colonel.

"His name is *not* Cartwright! I've ascertained all!"

"His name is *not* Cartwright?"

"No! it is Maitland!"

"Maitland! What! that Lieutenant Maitland?"

"Yes!"

"Heaven preserve my child!"

"But are you quite *sure* of that?" inquired Mrs. Brooke.

"Quite?" replied the colonel. "The general *knows* that he is the villain, by whom the name of Cartwright has been assumed."

"Is it not possible," urged Mrs. Brooke, as she turned to the general, "that you are mistaken?"

"No!" replied the general. "It is not possible. I know him to be the man."

Mrs. Brooke, in the impulse of the moment, was about to ask the general why, if such *were* the case, he associated with him; but prudence prompted her to be on that subject silent. She endeavoured to inspire Mrs. Storr with the hope that the general after all *was* mistaken, and to that point she steadily and earnestly adhered, until they retired for the night."

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## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE DISCOVERY.

As Mildmay and Tom had arranged to go for a ride in the morning before breakfast, they met in the stable at seven o'clock, mounted their horses, and started.

"Well," said Tom, on the road, "and how does the world use you?—Eh? Tidy?"

"Yes: I've no cause to complain," replied Mildmay.

"Getting on prosperous and populor—eh?—coining money as fast as the Mint, and growing indignantly rich!"

"I hope to be somewhat richer shortly," said Mildmay. "I am about to enter into a speculation, which—if it should succeed, and I have not the slightest doubt of its success — will place me in an excellent position."

"What sort of a speculation is it?—a literary sort of a dodge?"

"I am in treaty for a paper—a weekly paper—of which—if I can manage to purchase the copyright — I shall be able to make a good property."

"If you can *manage* to purchase the copyright? Don't they want to sell it, then?"

"Oh! yes."

"They ask too high a figure then, I suppose?"

"They don't ask more than I consider it to be worth; indeed, to *me*, it would be worth double the money."

"Then why don't you buy it at once?"

"Well—" said Mildmay, with some hesitation — "I am negotiating."

"Negotiating! What do you mean? Haven't you tin enough to buy it?"

"Why—I shall be able to manage, no doubt."

"Now, look here," said Tom. "I see how it is: you *haven't* got

enough. Now let's know all about it. What's about the price of the whole concern?"

"Three thousand pounds."

"And how much have you got?"

"Why, independently of what I may *raise*, I have only *one* thousand."

"Will three clear all off?"

"As it stands."

"But of course you'll want some to go on with?"

"Oh, a very small sum will be sufficient for that."

"And were you going to *raise* this money, as you call it—that is to say, borrow it, I suppose—without speaking to me?"

"I certainly was about to do so."

"Then you ain't half a man of your word. Didn't I make you promise me when you married, that if ever you wanted assistance in any way, you'd let me know? What d'you mean? I suppose you didn't like? I suppose you thought if you did, you'd be placing yourself under a kind of an obligation?"

"I have done that already."

"Not a bit of it. However, we'll say no more on that point now. Let's to business. Look here: I'm going to trust you with a secret. I've got in the corner of one of my trunks, screwed up in a piece of brown paper artful, five one thousand pound notes, which neither the governor, nor George, nor any other flesh alive besides Maitland knows anything about. Now look here:—Now don't say a word:—you shall have three of them: take three, and then you'll have your own one thousand to play with."

"You have now placed me under an obligation indeed."

"I wish you wouldn't say a word *about* it. Besides, I haven't done. Look here: when we get back—and we needn't be long about that—you shall have these three notes, and if I were you, I'd cut off to town by the earliest coach, secure the property for fear it should be gone, and leave Mary here till you come back."

"I will do so," said Mildmay; "I will. Tom!" he added, grasping his hand, "I have hardly power to thank you!"

"So much the better," cried Tom; "I don't want to be thanked. I'm very glad I kept these notes by me; because, there you are at once, without any bother. I *thought* they'd come in handy, one of these days."

"But are you not afraid of keeping so much money in the house?"

"Why, look here. I'll tell you how I got it. I don't mind telling you, because I'd trust you with my life. At the last races, Maitland and I had a regular go in, and won ten thousand pounds on The Flying Machine. We lost it as near as a toucher, it's true; but I'll tell you all about that, you know, another time. We won it; and,

as he and I went halves, we'd five thousand apiece. The governor knew nothing about it, nor did George: I kept it dark, because I *knew* that if it came to their ears that I'd been betting to such an extent, or even betting at all, I should catch it. Well: when I'd taken my share, I didn't know what to do with it. As the governor manages all my money matters for me, I couldn't give it to him to put out with the rest, without telling him, you know, all about it: and so, as I could neither do this, nor buy a little farm, or anything else, without letting the cat clean out of the bag, I screwed it up snug, and kept it by me."

"Well," said Mildmay, "I'm glad that you were so fortunate."

"I don't think I shall ever try it on *again*, mind you. But, come," he added, "let's treat our tits to a trot: because, if you go by the first coach, you haven't much time to lose."

Mildmay, of course, appreciated this consideration; and soon after that they returned to the Box, when Tom went up at once and got three of the notes, while Mildmay explained to Mary that business of importance rendered it necessary for him to go up to town at once.

"But cannot that business be deferred, dear, whatever it may be?" inquired Mary.

"If it be," replied Mildmay, "we may lose that paper. It may, during my absence from town, be sold; and as I am now in a position to secure it—"

"Are you, really?"

"I am."

"Oh! I'm so glad of that. But how do you know, dear?"

"I have this morning received information which places the matter beyond all doubt."

"Then don't let me induce you to stop another day. I'll go and get ready: what time are we to start?"

"You need not go with me, my dear."

"Need I not?"

"Oh, no. Remain here and be happy till I return."

"But will you send me all the particulars by post?"

"I will; and as soon as possible after the purchase has been effected I'll rejoin you here."

"There's a love! I can't help feeling sorry that you are going this morning, because we *should* have had such a happy day; but, as it is, I would on no account urge you to stop."

"You are a good girl, Mary," said Mildmay, and kissed her.

"Hullo!" cried Tom, who happened to pass the door at the moment. "Here's a public exhibition!"

"You shouldn't look," said Mary.

"Shouldn't look? Why, what flesh could help looking? Has

she finished?" he added, turning to Mildmay. "Because, if she has, perhaps you'll let me have a word with you here."

"You're exceedingly *rude*!" cried Mary, as Mildmay smiled, and followed him into the parlour.

"Now, look here," said Tom, having closed the door. "In the first place, put this little packet in your pocket, and don't say a word. And now I'll tell you what I'd recommend you to do. We don't have breakfast till nine, and that'll be pretty nearly half-past, I dare say. Now, you can't get away and be in time for the first coach if you stop and have breakfast with us. I'd therefore advise you to have yours now, and then you can be off when you like. What do you say?"

"I am anxious, of course, to get to town as soon as possible."

"Then we'll have breakfast up in a twinkling," said Tom, who rang the bell at once; and when the servant appeared, cried, "Breakfast for two, in a brace of *shakes*!—I'll have a cut in just by way of a whet."

The order was, in less than five minutes, accomplished; and Mildmay and Tom commenced. Mary most attentively presided on the occasion; and when Tom had whetted his appetite for breakfast, with about a pound of ham and four large cups of coffee, he left the room at once, with the view of ordering the curricule in which he intended to drive Mildmay to the coach.

Of course Mary took a little advantage of Tom's absence! Of course she didn't sit a *great* distance from Mildmay! Nor did Mildmay wish her to sit far from him: his love for her increased as her temper improved; and they passed ten minutes very pleasantly together before they again heard the voice of the indefatigable Tom.

Georgiana was, however, the first that entered; and as Mildmay rose to take her hand, she said, "So you really must run away from us?"

"It is to me of very great importance—"

"I am aware of it: I have heard all about it: I am not going to scold you, although it really is very tiresome. I know that you are compelled to leave us; and I hope that you will have a pleasant journey. You will not, however, remain in town long?"

"I'll return as soon as possible."

"I hope so."

"Now then," said Tom, as he entered the room, "the tits are ready when you are. We may as well start."

"Well, but *you* do not think of going with me to the coach?"

"Of course I do! Why, you *didn't* suppose I shouldn't see you off?"

"I certainly didn't suppose that you *would*. And even now, I'd much rather you would not."

"Because you think I shall keep the breakfast waiting. Oh, I



shall be back in time for breakfast! George isn't ready: nobody's ready. Besides, the governor ain't come yet, and of course no flesh'll touch a morsel till *he* comes! Don't say another word about it. When you are ready, come along."

Georgiana then left the room with him, ostensibly to look at the horses; and when Mildmay had affectionately taken leave of Mary, he and Tom left in the curricle together.

They had scarcely been gone five minutes, when Georgiana received a note from Mrs. Brooke, informing her that she and Mr. Storr would be on the Soham-road at twelve; and suggesting the expediency of her meeting them with Julia in her phaeton alone.

That this note amazed Georgiana is a fact which may well be conceived: she scarcely knew at the moment what answer to send; but having learned from the servant who brought it that Colonel Storr had also arrived at the Hall, she wrote an answer to the effect that she, at least, would meet them; and that if she *could* prevail upon Julia to accompany her she would.

The question which now suggested itself was—Should she announce at once the arrival of Colonel and Mrs. Storr, or not?—but, before she could decide upon it, Todd arrived: and to him she resolved on applying for advice.

"Well, my dear," he cried, as he entered the room; "and how are you all this mornin'? I met Mr. Mildmay and Tom on the road. But—" he added, perceiving symptoms of impatience, "what's the matter, my dear?—what's amiss?"

"I want your advice," said Georgiana. "In the first place, Colonel and Mrs. Storr are at the Hall."

"What, now?"

"They arrived late last night; and I have just received this note from mamma, in which it states that she and Mrs. Storr will be on the Soham-road at twelve o'clock, and expresses a wish to meet me there with Julia."

"Then meet them, my dear, by all manner o' means."

"I have sent word that *I* will meet them, and bring Julia with me, if *possible*."

"But of course she is willing to go?"

"That I have to ascertain. I've not spoken to her yet on the subject."

"Then do so at once, my dear, and—stop!—now I think of it, perhaps you'd better not spile her breakfast. Leave it till afterwards: *then* you can tell her: yes, that'll be better, I *think*."

"Would you advise me to mention the subject to Colonel Maitland?"

"Well, I don't know. I think not. I don't think there's any necessity for it. And yet I don't know. I don't *like* concealment! There's been enough already in this matter, I'm *afraid*! I've been

thinkin' all night about it serious, and can't say I'm satisfied yet. However, we shall know more about it by-and-by. I'll tell you what we'll do. Directly after breakfast—don't say a word about it before—but directly after, you take Mrs. Maitland up-stairs and tell her in private; and while you're together, I'll speak to the colonel myself. What d'you think?"

"But will he let her go with me?"

"Why, my dear, of course."

"Well! if you think that he *will*, let it be so."

"I don't see how he can object! Do you get Mrs. Maitland to consent, and I'll manage all the rest with him."

"Very well," said Georgiana, "then thus let it be."

At a quarter to ten—as Tom had returned—the party sat down to breakfast, during which, Tom and Maitland were gay in the extreme; but the ladies looked very mysterious.

At length Georgiana, addressing Julia privately, said, "I wish to have a word with you, dear: follow me:" and they both rose at once and left the room. "I have *such* news for you," she added, as they ascended the stairs.

"Indeed!" cried Julia.

"Ay, indeed!—Now then," she added, having led her to the sofa, "what would you say, dear, if I were to tell you that your kind mamma is near you now?"

"Mamma!" exclaimed Julia, with a start. "Is she here?"

"Not absolutely here in the house: still she is very near us."

"Where is she?"

"At the Hall. She arrived late last night, and is now most anxious to see you."

"Oh! how I dread to meet her! But how did you ascertain this?"

"I have received this note from mamma, dear: read it."

Julia took the note with a trembling hand, and having read it, exclaimed, "Oh! I *dare* not go with you!"

"You dare not! Why, Julia! You dare not meet a kind mamma, for the purpose of receiving her forgiveness?"

"I am not sure that that is her object."

"Why, you cannot imagine that her object is to load you with reproaches! she loves you too fondly for that. Come! no objection whatever must be raised. I'll have the ponies put to the phaeton, and then we can drive round to meet them at once."

"But will Colonel Maitland approve of this step?"

"Why, of course, dear! I'm quite sure he'll object to nothing, having a tendency to bring about a reconciliation. Shall I run down and hear what he says on the subject?"

"Do, dear, please. I cannot, of course, act without his sanction."

"Of course not! He knows all about it by this time. Mr. Todd, who has seen the note, undertook to mention it as soon as we had left the room. I'll therefore run down at once, and learn the result. Now keep up your spirits! Have no apprehensions! Recollect, dear, you go to meet a kind mamma; who is, I'm sure, anxious to forgive you."

Georgiana then returned to the breakfast-room, and found Maitland and Todd conversing at one of the windows; the former with an expression of displeasure, and the latter with an eye of suspicion.

"You have," she observed, as she approached them, "you have explained this matter to Colonel Maitland, I presume?"

"I have," replied Todd; "but he appears to object to the meeting!"

"Indeed!" cried Georgiana. "On what grounds?"

"I object to her being humiliated," replied Maitland.

"Humiliated!" cried Georgiana. "Humiliated!"

"Besides," added Maitland, "this may be a plot in which Storr himself may be the principal mover."

"Impossible! No, Colonel Maitland! Let me assure you that *my* mamma would never lend herself to any such contrivance as that which you contemplate."

"But he may know of it, and be there with them."

"I feel perfectly convinced that he does *not* know of it; and that we shall meet them in the carriage alone. You really must not for one moment imagine that my mamma would be guilty of the meanness of deceiving us on such a point as this."

"I beg of you to believe that I don't imagine that; but as Mrs. Storr herself necessarily knows that this appointment has been made, she may have told him. You know what fathers are capable of doing; and if he, on meeting her, were to commit any outrage, the consequences might be dreadful."

"Will you—*will* you allow me to assure you that Colonel Storr will not be there."

"I feel assured that you *believe* that he will not be there; but as, of course, you cannot know—"

"Well, look here," said Todd. "I'll tell you what. You've no objection to her seein' her mother, of course?"

"Not the slightest!"

"Very well. Then look here. Let 'em go in the phaeton alone, and you and me'll follow 'em at a respectable distance on horseback. If, when they meet, Colonel Storr should be there, we'll ride up and pectect 'em: if not, if the ladies should be in the carriage alone, why then we can cut back and not interfere. Now, what do you say?"

"My only object is to protect her from outrage."

"Very well! As that'll do it, why, so let it be."

"What *are* you three mysterious swells a planning?" cried Tom.  
"Going to blow the blessed parliament all up, or what?"

"Mrs. Maitland," replied Todd, "is goin' to meet her mother."

"Going to meet her how much? What d'you mean? You don't mean to say she's going back to London, do you?"

"No, dear," said Georgiana. "This note will explain all: just read it."

Tom took the note, and, having read it, exclaimed—"Well; send I may live, but that's good! I say! they haven't lost much time about it! Nor have you got much time to lose, if you mean to meet 'em! Have you ordered the drag?"

"No, dear," replied Georgiana.

"Then I'd better ring the bell at once, and do it."

"Order a couple of horses to be saddled at the same time," said Todd.

"Who for?" inquired Tom.

"For me and Colonel Maitland. You see, Tommy, if Colonel Storr should be there, he may be a little opstropolis! So we're goin' to follow, you know, to see."

"Very good! But don't you think I'd better go instead of you?"

"Just as the colonel likes, Tommy: I don't care which."

"Oh! I'd better go with him, of course! You can stop at home and take care of Polly."

"Very well!" returned Todd. "Then so let it be. But time's gettin' on!"

"I'll see about that. Run away, Georgey, and cock on your things. All shall be ready in the twinkling of an eye."

Georgiana then at once returned to Julia, and, as Tom went immediately to the stable and gave the necessary instructions, in less than a quarter of an hour they were off.

"Now, Julia," said Maitland, on the road, "you must, of course, expect that my character will be painted in the blackest colours possible."

"By whom, my dear?" inquired Julia. "Surely not by mamma?"

"If she be not instructed to describe me as one of the most consummate scoundrels upon earth, I shall be indeed surprised."

"My dear!" exclaimed Julia. "How can you for a moment imagine such a thing?"

"We shall see. I mention it merely in order to prepare you: so satisfied am I that you will hear all against me that malice can invent."

"Indeed! Oh! I cannot believe it."

"Well, what's the odds?" cried Tom. "You mustn't mind that. I dare say the general gives *me* a sweet character; but what's the odds? Perhaps it is but natural after all."

"Natural, dear?" said Georgiana.

"Of course!—according as Nature goes, you know!—according to the present uncivilised state of Nature! I'll bet ten to one that if I *wanted* a character, he wouldn't be the very first man I should apply to. Do you think he would?"

"No, dear."

"Very well, then! That proves at once it's natural: according, of course, as Nature goes!"

"Well," said Georgiana, with a smile, "that's an exceedingly *strong* proof, certainly! And now," she added, on turning into the Soham-road, "will you gentlemen be kind enough to allow us to leave you?"

"Cut away," cried Tom. "*We'll* keep you in our eye till we see it's all right; and then I s'pose you can spare us!"

"Oh!" said Maitland, "we'll ride about here till they return."

"Very good! Perhaps that *will* be a little more popular. What d'you say, George?"

"We shall, of course, be most happy to return with you," replied Georgiana.

"Very well! Then cut away. There's the carriage, now. Look! there they are!"

Georgiana urged her ponies forward, and in a very few seconds the carriage met them; when Julia, bursting into tears, cried, "Speak for me, dear: pray speak."

"Courage! courage!" whispered Georgiana, as one of the servants opened the carriage door. "All—all will be well."

"Julia," said Mrs. Storr; "Julia—come here."

The servant went to the ponies' heads, and Georgiana, having alighted herself, assisted Julia out of the phaeton.

"My dear girl," said Mrs. Storr, when Julia had entered the carriage, "I have no desire to wound your feelings, Julia: I came not here to reproach you; my first object is to ascertain whom you have married. In your note to me you mention the name of Cartwright. Is your husband's name Cartwright or not?"

"It is not, mamma," replied Julia, faintly. "His real name is Maitland."

"Maitland! Then all is lost. Julia, my child, may Heaven protect you! My worst fears are realised. Would that you were dead!"

"Why—why?" inquired Georgiana, anxiously, as Julia sank back in the carriage, and wept. "Why do you object to him?"

"My dear, you do not know him," replied Mrs. Storr; "you do not know him. He is one of the most dishonourable men—"

"Mamma!" exclaimed Julia, "pray do not say so."

"I would, my dear child, it were otherwise! He is an impostor—a gambler—a villain!"

"Mamma! Indeed, *indeed*, you are mistaken. He is one of the

kindest and most amiable men that ever breathed. Georgiana knows him well."

"No, my dear, she does not. She does *not* know him! He is that which I have described to you, and more! Heaven pity you, my child! Heaven pity you."

"My dear Mrs. Storr," said Georgiana, "you have amazed me; and as I feel that I am to some extent involved in this affair, may I beg of you to explain what you mean. Colonel Maitland, who is one of papa's friends, we have always found an amiable, honourable man."

"Indeed, my dear, you do not know him. He is an impostor! He is *not* one of the general's friends!"

"My dear Mrs. Storr, you are really mistaken. Why, I have a note at home in papa's own handwriting—"

"A forgery, my dear; you may be assured of that."

"Impossible!" returned Georgiana. "Why, mamma! of whom did we purchase Adonis?"

"I'm inclined to think with you, my dear," replied Mrs. Brooke, "that Colonel Maitland and the general have been intimately connected, but, unhappily, I cannot but believe him to be a most dishonourable man."

"My dear mamma," said Georgiana, earnestly, "*do* you speak merely with reference to the fact of his having, under an *assumed* name, secured the hand of Julia?"

"No, my love, no: without reference to that, his character is perfectly shocking."

"Indeed! Why, what has he done, mamma? What *has* he done?"

"He is, my dear, what they call a blackleg, a swindler. He was compelled to leave his regiment in India for cheating Colonel Storr, and has ever since been living by knavery."

"Is it possible?"

"His character, my dear," interposed Mrs. Storr, "is, I assure you, most dreadful."

"Mamma," said Julia, firmly, "I wish to leave the carriage. Colonel Maitland is my husband; and I cannot *bear* to hear him thus traduced."

"My poor girl—"

"I am sorry, mamma, to have occasion to speak thus; but if it be imagined that I am to be set against *him*—"

"My dear Julia!—"

"Malice, mamma, may do much: by slander his reputation may be injured; but if it be conceived—"

"My dear girl—Julia!—"

"He *said* that this would be the course pursued. He prepared me for it—"

"Being anxious—"

"Mamma, I'll remain here no longer. Your forgiveness I would on my knees have solicited, but you have inspired me with feelings of indignation. He is my husband!—my idol!—he is dearer to me than life!—and therefore I'll *not* remain to hear him thus slandered."

"My Julia: my Julia!" cried Mrs. Storr, imploringly; but Julia having desired the servant to open the door, at once quitted the carriage.

"Georgiana, my love," cried Mrs. Brooke, calmly, as Mrs. Storr sank back and bitterly wept, "let me beg of you to be on your guard. Be assured that this Maitland *is*— Well, well, for Heaven's sake be on your guard!"

"I will, mamma," returned Georgiana. "I'll inquire into this. It certainly does at present appear to me to be most extraordinary. But I'll inquire into it. God bless you, mamma. Will you let me see you here again to-morrow?"

"I'll be here."

"God bless you. Be assured that I *will* be on my guard. There is, I fear, more—much more—beneath the surface."

She then kissed them both most affectionately, and having re-entered the phaeton, drove back.

"You, of course, perceive the object?" said Julia, as they returned. "It is, of course, abundantly clear to you that they wish to set me against him."

"I hope that that *may* be their object," said Georgiana.

"Well, but surely you do not believe that he *is* the dishonourable man mamma has represented him to be?"

"I *hope* that he is not."

"He cannot be. I will *not* believe it. He was perfectly correct when he said that this course would be pursued."

"Unfortunately that appears to me to justify suspicion. Why should he have *imagined* that that course would be pursued?"

"Because he imagined that papa would be revengeful."

"Well, dear, well; I hope—I hope."

Maitland and Tom now approached them; and as they did so, Maitland cried, "My dear Julia, I fear—I very much fear—that my conjecture has proved to be correct."

"Frederick," said Julia, with an expression of intensity, "it has. But you are not the dishonourable person they describe? You cannot be: oh, I feel sure that you are not!"

"My girl," replied Maitland, "I knew exactly how it would be."

"Of course!" cried Tom; "nothing could be more safe. No witch in flesh could have guessed the thing nearer. But what did she say? Eh, George, what did she say?"

"More than I should like to repeat, dear," replied Georgiana: "much more; but we'll talk the matter over by-and-by."

About this time Colonel Storr called at the Box, and having ascertained that Todd was within, requested the servant to say that he wished to speak with him in private.

Todd, who had, during the whole of the morning, expected the colonel to call, no sooner heard that he was there, than exclaiming, "Now, all must come out," proceeded to the parlour into which he had been shown.

"Your most obedient," said Todd, as he entered the room. "Hope you're well, sir. Allow me to hand you a chair."

"Mr. Todd," said the colonel, "you can, I presume, guess the object of this visit?"

"I guess, sir," replied Todd, "it's sutfen about your daughter."

"It has reference, more especially, to the villain who stole her from me. Mr. Todd, let me put you on your guard. The fellow whom you have harboured here is one of the greatest scoundrels upon earth. I say this advisedly: I say it calmly: he is, without exception, the most consummate *wretch* that ever breathed."

"These are hard words," said Todd. "They're uncommon hard words. Do you use them *because* he has married your daughter?"

"No; I now speak irrespective of that. He is an impostor—a swindler—a blackleg!—a fellow whom gamblers term a Bonnet!"

"What?" cried Todd. "What? Then how is it that General Brooke is his friend?"

"He is not his friend."

"Not his friend? I'll prove that he is, in about two minutes."

"He *represents* the general as being a friend of his—"

"And not without cause! I'll show you. Look here," he added, producing the note which the general sent to Maitland at the White Hart. "Look here: I put this in my pocket this morning, because I somehow or another thought it might be useful. Of course, Colonel Storr, you know he took the name of Cartwright?"

"I do."

"Very well, then. Look here. Now you know this here system of sailin', you know, under false colours, I don't *like*—I can't like—I never could like;—and since I've known it, no flesh has been able to beat me out of my suspicions: but just you look here: whose hand-writin' is this?"

"'Dear Cartwright!'" cried the colonel, as he looked at the note, "'Dear Cartwright!'"

"*That's* the pint! *There* you are. *That's* what I look at! 'Dear Cartwright!' you see, as plain as the sun at twelve o'clock! Now, whose writin' is that?"

"The general's, I'll swear!"



"Very well then. And yet he ain't a friend! That's the pint."

"I'm amazed!"

"Now, the only question is, has the general been taken in? Does he, or does he not, know the real character of this Maitland?"

"He does! He knows it well!"

"Then how do you account for 'Dear Cartwright'?"

"I cannot account for it. He knows that his name is Maitland: he knows that he assumed the name of Cartwright for the sole purpose of carrying on his gambling transactions with greater success—"

"Well, but look here. Do you mean to say he's connected with any house in Newmarket?"

"Yes: one almost immediately opposite the White Hart."

"Then I'll get to the bottom of it. I'll find it out. I'll find it all out in the course of the day. If that's true, I'll know it, and no mistake. I can hardly think it; and yet I'm afraid."

"You'll find him, if you inquire in the proper quarter, to be a swindler, and a scoundrel!"

"I'll get at it all. But isn't it true that you were a friend of his, in India?"

"It is true that I served with him in India; but it is also true that I was the means of his being kicked out of the regiment for cheating."

"Did the general know that?"

"Of course he did."

"Then there's suffen at the bottom of this more than I can brain. Now *will* you let me ask you one question?"

"A thousand, if you please."

"Then look here: do you think—I merely ask if you *think*—the general knew that this Maitland was going to run away with your daughter?"

"Do I think that he knew? Mr. Todd, as a straightforward man, let me know at once why you have asked that question?"

"I will. Now look here: I was talking last night to a friend of mine, which hinted, that perhaps the general did know; that perhaps you had been laughin' at him for havin' had *his* daughter, you know, run away with; and that, therefore, perhaps he wouldn't tell you of this, because you mightn't be able to laugh at him any more. You know this was merely a hint! I've no proof, you know, of anything of that sort, but as it does seem so unaccountable queer that the general should associate with a man which he knew to be a swindler—that is to say, you know, if he is—this I say does look so uncommon strange, that I'm sure there must be suffen at the bottom of it all, more than we can at present brain."

"Mr. Todd," said the colonel, after a pause, during which they kept their eyes intently fixed upon each other, "*will* you do me the favour to lend me that note?"

"Why, you see, sir," replied Todd, "you see it's a thing which I shouldn't, of course, like to lose."

"It shall not be lost. If you'll lend it to me, I pledge you my honour that it shall be returned."

"Very well, sir; you shall have it. But I should like to take a copy of it first."

"I'll write you a copy, and sign it myself. If you'll oblige me with a pen and ink, I'll do it at once."

Todd immediately placed a desk before him, and when the copy had been written, the colonel said, "The original you shall have again to-morrow."

"Very good, sir. That'll do. I suppose," he added, "now you are here—I suppose you'll stop and just see your daughter?"

"No, Mr. Todd; no, no."

"I expect they'll both be back very shortly."

"Let them come. I have made up my mind to speak to neither until the whole affair has been clearly explained. Be, however, on your guard!"

"I *will* be," returned Todd. "I'll see about it—be assured of that. I'll find out the bottom of it all; and I should much like to see you again in the mornin'."

"Well, where shall we meet?"

"Anywhere you like, sir; it makes no odds to me."

"Then let us meet where we met before: I mean, at the Rutland Arms."

"Very good, sir: what time?"

"Say twelve."

"I'll be there."

The colonel then rose; and having taken his leave, re-mounted his horse, and started.

"Here's a go! Here's a go!" exclaimed Todd, as he stood with his hands deeply buried in his pockets. "Now then. Hold hard a bit. What's the first move? Shall I speak to Maitland private, and give him a chance of clearing his character? That'll be fair—and nothin' *but* fair—before I make any more stir about the matter. That'll be it. I'll do so. I knew there was sutfen wrong: I *knew* it!—I'd have bet a million of it; and now here you are."

The ladies, accompanied by Maitland and Tom, soon returned; and when Todd had ascertained from Georgiana what had occurred in the carriage, he immediately went up to Maitland, and said, "I should like to have a word or two with you in private."

"By all means," returned Maitland, who followed him at once.

"Colonel Maitland," said Todd, having entered one of the parlours, "I can't have lived all these years without knowing sutfen of the world: nor can I have been sittiwated, as I have been, without knowin'

suffen of what men'll do when their daughters have been run away with. Now, look here: we've known you some time; and with the exception of your taking another name, we've found you straight-forrard and right. Very well. Now look here. While you were out, Colonel Storr called—he called to see me—and he gives you such an out-and-out dreadful character that I thought it right and fair, you know, to mention it to you, in order that you might at once clear it all up."

"That is a task which I shall not undertake," returned Maitland. "His description of me—let it be what it may—I treat with the utmost contempt!"

"Very good. But look here. I know that fathers in such cases ain't too particular. But that's not the pint: the pint's this: wouldn't it be better, you know—just for the satisfaction of your friends—"

"All who are my friends, I hope, are satisfied already. He has even commissioned his wife to defame me."

"So I understand. But then that's not the pint. Why, he calls you an impostor—a gambler—a villain—"

"The very epithets employed by Mrs. Storr! But let them call me what they please!—I care not *what* they call me."

"Well, I only know that *I* should care. But that's not the pint—"

"The only point I apprehend is this: is it—can it be—worth my while to run about for the purpose of rebutting every charge that may be brought against me by such a revengeful man as that? I contend that it is not, and therefore I treat every charge with the contempt it deserves. I knew how it would be. I couldn't, of course, expect that he would give me anything like a *decent* character! I knew that whatever *could* be said against a man would be said against me; and as every one of his attempts to injure me *must* be ascribed to those feelings of revenge which I have, by marrying his daughter, inspired, I shall take no trouble at all about the matter."

"Well!" rejoined Todd, "you, of course, may know best; but it strikes me that if I were *you* I should take a little trouble about the matter. However, as you think it unnecessary, you, of course, may be right. I thought it best to *tell* you what he had said on the subject; and, having done so, I must leave you to take your own course."

That Todd was not satisfied is a fact which scarcely need be stated; nor is it hardly necessary to state that Maitland clearly saw that he was not satisfied. It will be, however, quite right to explain that Maitland perceived this so clearly, that, had it not been for the feelings of Julia, he would have left the house at once. He wished not to deprive her of Georgiana's society: he was anxious, moreover, to be friendly still with Tom: he, therefore, in silence, suffered Todd to leave the room, and satisfied himself with an expression of indignation.

"Tommy," said Todd, on leaving Maitland, "I want you."

"What about?" inquired Tom.

"I want you to come with me into the town."

"Well, but not before lunch?"

"We can have lunch there."

"Very well. Shall I drive you over?"

"Yes, if you like. Order the horses directly. I've suffen to say to you, Tommy, which 'll just about astonish your nerves."

"Why, what's up?"

"Never mind; do as I tell you."

"Oh! send I may live! I'll have 'em ready in no time. But give us a notion."

"It's suffen about Maitland."

"I thought as much. Well, do you go and tell George we're going, and then come round. I'll have the horses in in about a brace of shakes."

Todd accordingly went to Georgiana, and having told her that they were going to Newmarket on business, he followed Tom at once to the stable, and in less than five minutes they were off.

"Now then," said Tom, the moment they had passed the gate, "what's all this about?"

"Look here," replied Todd: "just look here. I want you to tell me the blessed truth."

"That I'll do. What is it?"

"Never mind, if even it ain't none to your credit. Let's have the truth, Tommy."

"Well, cut away."

"Did you ever go into a gamblin'-house with Maitland?"

"I never went into a gambling-house at all."

"But did he ever ask you to go with him?"

"Never."

"That's a fact, Tommy? Don't deceive me. That's the solemn fact?"

"It is as true as I'm alive."

"Very good. I believe you. But Colonel Storr, which called when you were out—"

"What, this morning?"

"Yes. He says that Maitland gets his *livin'* by gamblin'!"

"Ducks!" cried Tom. "He knows no more about gambling than a pig knows about a pocket-pistol."

"Well, Tommy, I hope he doesn't: I *only* hope he doesn't; but I have my suspicions. Look here. From what Colonel Storr told me, I'm sure there's suffen in it, and I *will* get to the bottom of it all if I live."

"Why, what's the odds what Colonel Storr's told you. Wouldn't the general say as much against me?"

"It don't matter, Tommy: I'll ferret it out. Now look here. The colonel says he's connected with that house, you know, where that Captain Crock goes, you know, opposite the Hart. Very well: that's a clue. If I find that he *is*, why then, you know, that'll be a settler."

"Of course! But I'll bet ten to one he knows nothing about it. It's all a dodge, you know. I'll bet a million it's what you may call an invention."

"I wish it may be, Tommy, with all my heart! But we shall see. Now look here. I'll tell you what we'll do: we'll go to a man which knows as much as any flesh knows about the whole lot."

"Who's that? Charley?"

"No; a man which they call Jim—Jim Johnson. He's what they call the porter at that very house."

"Very well: but will he tell us?"

"Tell us? I know him. A sovereign, sometimes, 'll go a good way."

"Well! we can ask him. But look here, I'll bet you a million you're wrong."

"I wish I *may* be, Tommy: that's all, I wish I may be."

"Well, but let's know all about it. Now just start off fair. The colonel called while we were out. Well, tell us all he said."

Todd at once proceeded to do so, and just as he had finished, they entered the town.

"Well," said Tom, "this, you know, don't astonish me much! However, we shall know more about it by-and-by. Shall we go to the old house?"

"Of course," replied Todd; and Tom, having reached it, dashed into the yard.

"Now then," said Tom, "the sooner this is all settled, the better I shall like it. Now, how do you mean to manage?"

"Come in," replied Todd. "We'll soon see about this. Sam," he added, turning to Meadows, as they entered the house, "you know Jim—Jim Johnson, Sam, don't you?"

"I *know* him, sir, cert'ney; but I don't know much good of him."

"Never mind that, Sam; I want to have a word with him. I wish you'd run and ask him to give a look up."

"Of course, sir," replied Sam, who started off at once, and in less than ten minutes returned with Jim Johnson.

"Well, Jim!" cried Todd, as Jim entered the bar, "and how does the world use you?"

"Oh! I don't know, sir; middlinish!"

"Come and have a glass of wine, then. Now look here," he added, "I want to ask a question, and I think you know that when I get an answer I always like to pay for it. Now just look here: Do you know a Colonel Cartwright?"

"Yes," replied Jim.

"What sort of a swell is he?"

"Oh! I don't know!—pretty middlinish! Proud as a peacock, you know, if you mean that."

"But what is he?"

"Oh! I don't know. He's in the ring!"

"He's connected with your house, is he not?"

"Well, I don't know: you may *say* he's connected with it; but he hasn't done much for it lately."

"But he used?"

"Oh! yes. He used to bring swells in night after night!"

"Of course," cried Todd.

"But look here," said Tom. "What sort of a looking swell is he?"

"Why," replied Jim, with a smile, "you don't want to ask *me* that question, sir, do you? I've seen him with you, sir, I think, pretty often."

"Tommy! Tommy!" cried Todd.

"But where?" inquired Tom.

"Oh! about the town on horseback, and sometimes in your curricule."

"Exactly! But did you ever see me at your house?"

"No, sir, never; but I've often expected to see you. I thought he'd have brought you there long before this."

"And the man you have seen me riding with is the very man you mean?"

"Yes, sir! that's Colonel Cartwright. At least, I don't know you know that's his real name! I believe not—but that's the name he goes by."

"That's enough: that's quite enough," cried Tom. "Here's a sov for you, Jim. Now keep it dark."

"I hope you'll do the same, sir; because, if you don't, it may hoist me from my situation."

"All right!" said Todd, "that's understood, of course. Now then, Jim, pass the bottle."

Jim did so, and then explained all that he knew having reference to Maitland's character; and when all that he *could* tell had been told, Tom and Todd had lunch, and prepared to return.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

## THE CONFESSION.

WHEN Colonel Storr had taken leave of Todd at the Box, he rode immediately back to the Hall, and as the general was then in his library alone, he went directly to him.

"Brooke," said he, "I have a note in my possession thus directed—'Colonel Cartwright, White Hart Inn, Newmarket.' Now, as this note is in your handwriting, and as you have addressed him, 'Dear Cartwright,' you, of course, will not object to explain how you reconcile the fact of your having thus addressed him with your declaration last night that no friendship existed between you."

"Let me look at the note," said the general, who endeavoured, but in vain, to conceal his confusion. "Is that it?"

"It is. 'Dear Cartwright!' you perceive?"

"I do perceive. I *have* written 'Dear Cartwright.' And yet my declaration was correct: for there *is* no friendship between us. I addressed him thus for a special purpose. I had a particular object in view."

"No doubt. But you do not object to explain to me what that particular object was?"

"That object was revenge. Thus far I'll explain. Resolved on bringing down, if possible, those despicable wretches with whom my daughter is connected, I employed this impostor, through whose instrumentality I imagined that that object might be achieved."

"That is to say, you wished him to swindle them out of all they possessed."

"I cared not what he did! My object was to see them brought completely down!"

"I understand."

"And now that I have made this confession, I hope that you are perfectly satisfied."

"As far as that is concerned, I am satisfied, certainly: although I cannot say that I approve—"

"With that, of course, you have nothing whatever to do!"

"I admit it. But did he never say that he was after my daughter?"

"In my presence? Never."

"Then you had no idea of that being his object?"

"Not the slightest. No, Storr. If I'd had, I should not have kept it from you."

"I thought that he might inadvertently have mentioned it."

"No : never to me."

"I am satisfied."

"Have you then seen this swindler?"

"I have not."

"Then how come you by that note?"

"That I'd rather not explain."

"But I feel that I've a right to know."

"A *right* to know, Brooke?"

"Yes : a right."

"I do not understand how you can have any right. But you must be in any case now content to know that I have obtained possession of it."

"Then you'll *not* tell me how?"

"I cannot, without committing a breach of confidence."

"Very well, Colonel Storr," cried the general, haughtily : "very well, sir. Of course you are at liberty to conceal the fact from me."

"I presume, General Brooke, that I am," replied the colonel ; and instantly quitted the room.

He then directed his servant to prepare for their departure ; and when the ladies returned he assisted Mrs. Brooke to alight, and said, "Will you do me the favour to lend us your carriage for an hour?"

"Of course ! with great pleasure," replied Mrs. Brooke. "But," she added, as his servant brought a trunk out, "you are surely not going to leave us?"

"We are going to Newmarket," replied the colonel. "I have not only been insulted but disgusted."

"I am, indeed, truly sorry for it."

"For *you* we entertain still the highest esteem. All the rest will suggest itself to you. Good morning."

The ladies, then in tears, took leave of each other ; and when Mrs. Brooke had said, "*I* will call," the colonel cried, "Drive to the Rutland Arms."

Maitland still remained at the Box, Todd having decided upon saying nothing more to him on the subject until he had again seen Colonel Storr. They were, however, exceedingly distant during the evening, and retired unusually early.

At the appointed time, in the morning, Todd went to the Rutland Arms, and was immediately shown into Colonel Storr's room.

"Your most obedient," said he, as he entered. "I have," he added, as the colonel took his hand—"I have, I am sorry to say, ascertained that what you told me yesterday mornin' is correct."

"I have ascertained more," cried the colonel—"much more—and feel myself bound, as a man, to explain to you all that I *have* ascertained. You and your son have had a narrow escape : a plot was



laid to ruin you both, and this scoundrel Maitland was the instrument employed."

"What! what!" exclaimed Todd. "But how?"

"Listen. General Brooke, who is my friend no longer, being resolved upon bringing you down, employed this very villain to plunder you and your son, and involve you all in irretrievable ruin."

"Good God! You don't say so? But how was he to do it?"

"He was, in the first place, to gain your son's confidence; then to lead him into the gaming-house—"

"He couldn't ha' done it so—but that says nothin'. Tom's too wide awake for that; but that's not the pint: the pint is, the plan was laid; and do you mean to say that the *general* employed this viper in human flesh?"

"I do. He confessed it all yesterday morning; the note you lent me brought it all out. I called upon him at once to explain how, knowing the villain's character, he could associate with him, and address him, '*Dear Cartwright*;' when, in order to justify himself before me, he confessed that he had employed him to bring you all down—that is to say, to reduce you to a state of destitution."

"I hardly know," said Todd, "which is the biggest villain of the two! In speaking of the general, I never used such strong language before; but now I don't care if you tell him what I say."

"Oh, I shall have nothing more to do with him. As soon as this confession had been made I quitted the Hall with feelings of disgust."

"Then, are you not stoppin' there now?"

"No; I came here from there yesterday morning, and do not intend to return."

"Well," cried Todd, "this gets over me; it's nothin' to say that they *couldn't* ha' done it. They would if they could—that's the pint. They meant it; that's what I look at. But *I'll* soon have that viper out of the house! *I'll* very soon get rid of him. Why, you don't know how kind he's been treated by us all. We couldn't—if he'd been our own flesh and blood—we couldn't have behaved to him better. This is gratitude, this is. Oh! what a scamp! But *I'll* soon cook his goose for him! I'll have him out! Colonel Storr," he added, rising, "I'm obliged to you. I thank you, sir, with all my heart. I'll now go and see after this great villain."

"Will you let me know the result?"

"Of course, sir. But when do you think of leavin'?"

"Oh, I shall be here a few days, I've no doubt. I want, of course, to keep my eye upon him for a time."

"I understand. And all I can find out you shall know."

"I thank you. Good morning."

Todd then left the inn, and proceeded in haste to the Box.

On his arrival he immediately took Tom aside, and having related to him the substance of all that had occurred, he cried, "Now, Tommy, what d'you think of that?"

"Think of it?" replied Tom. "What do I think of it? Why, I'll go and take him by the scruff of his blessed neck, and pitch him bang out of the house!"

"Hold hard, Tommy. Don't be too fast. Use no violence—'cause, you know, that ain't worth while. Let's go in and speak to him calm; and when we have told him all we know, we can say to him, 'Now, you'd better cut it!'"

"Very well: as you like; but I shan't be over-nice with him, mind you that."

"Now you leave it all to me. Come along. Where is he?"

"In the parlour."

"Alone?"

"No."

"Then go and bring him into this room."

Tom did so, and Maitland firmly entered. He had fully expected that all *must* come out, and therefore had nerved himself for the occasion.

"Colonel Maitland," said Todd, "I think it my duty to tell you that the result of the inquiries I have made has convinced me that you are *not* the man I took you for, nor anything like it."

"Well, sir," returned Maitland: "well?"

"We thought you were a *friend*, Colonel Maitland."

"And now, I presume, you imagine that I am not?"

"A man who can undertake to *ruin* another, can't well be much of a friend. You undertook to ruin us *all*!"

"I did; and *yet* I have been your friend."

"Well, but send I may live!" cried Tom; "how do you make that out?"

"I'll tell you. He who employed me *thought* that I was a villain, and therefore I resolved, by being a friend to you, to have my revenge upon him."

"Well, but what do you mean!" cried Tom. "What sort of revenge have you had upon *him*?"

"I can easily explain, if you wish me to do so."

"If I *wish* you to do so! You *ought* to explain."

"Then I will. That ten thousand pounds came out of his pocket—"

"What ten thousand pounds?" inquired Todd.

"The ten thousand pounds which we won on that horse—"

"Which *we* won!—who's *we*?"

"I mean your son and I."

"Tommy," cried Todd, "what's all this? Is that a fact?"

"It's all right," said Tom, "as far as that goes. And now *that* cat's out of the bag cut away."

"Well," pursued Maitland, "of that sum Brooke commissioned me to rob you. He bribed the jockey, and got me to induce you to take the ten thousand pound bet of his agent, and, as you are aware, on the eve of the race, I made it known that the jockey *had* been bribed, and thus caused this villain to lose."

"Well, send I may live!" cried Tom, "that's a stunner!"

"I never injured *you* to the extent of a shilling: I never *would* have injured you. My object has been to make *him* suffer—to punish him for his villany."

"Well, but look here," said Todd: "hold hard a bit. Did you divide this ten thousand between you?"

"We did."

"All right," said Tom; "I had five thousand of it."

"And lost it all again, I suppose?"

"Not a bit of it. That's safe enough."

"Oh, Tommy, Tommy: I don't like this."

"I knew you wouldn't: I knew that very well, and therefore I kept it from you."

"Which you'd no right to do. I must talk to you on this subject calm."

"It's no use you putting yourself out about it now. The thing's done, and all I've got to say is this: I've had such a lesson that no flesh 'll ever catch me at it again."

"I hope not, Tommy: I *hope* not."

"Not a bit of it. I've had enough of that."

"Well," said Todd, turning to Maitland, "in one sense I'm glad you've explained all this to me: for your character did appear to me to be so black that I'd made up my mind to say at once, 'You'd better leave.'"

"I did think of leaving yesterday," returned Maitland; "I am now, however, glad that I did not. I am glad that you have given me this opportunity of explaining the whole matter to you, and now perhaps I'd better leave with Julia at once."

"There's no call for that now," cried Tom; "is there?"

"Why, look here," said Todd; "unfortunately Maitland is connected with a gamblin'-house."

"I *was*," cried Maitland, "I *was*—for a purpose; but I am not now, nor shall I ever be again."

"Well, I must say this," observed Tom, "you never asked *me* to go into it."

"Never! I have received so much kindness from you all, that had it ever been my intention to injure you, I *couldn't* have done it. Still, after what has occurred, I feel that the better plan will be for me to leave."

"Stop: hold hard: just look here," said Todd. "You've a new-married wife—a wife which is a good one, and which is fond of our

Georgiana. Now look here : if you take her away, she won't have a soul but you to speak to—not a soul which she knows ; and as she seems to be very happy here, and as you have convinced me that you had no intention of injurin' *us*, why I think you'd better stop here a little while longer, you know, just for the sake of *her*."

"Of course," cried Tom. "That's about it—of course!"

"Well," said Maitland, "if I do so, it will be for her sake alone."

"We needn't tell *her*, you know," said Tom, "how many secrets go to an ounce. We needn't tell *her* about the general!"

"I shall tell her," resumed Maitland ; "I shall tell her, and then she'll see at once that my object was to *prevent*, and not to promote your ruin."

"Well, if that's the case," said Tom, "I suppose George had better know too. But we needn't trouble ourselves about that : when one knows she'll tell the other, safe. But I say : that general though : send I may live !—I say, *could* you have thought he'd have been such a swell?"

"He's a bad 'un," returned Todd—"a real rank bad 'un. I knew it before : I knew it from the first—I *knew* it : I've known it ever since that horse affair, and, therefore, didn't want to be told. I call *him* a father—I do—a father ! Such flesh ought never to have a child."

"Well, come," said Tom, "now let's go and look at the petticoats ; and then we'll have a little bit of something to eat. Maitland," he added, "I *don't* believe that you'd ever do me out of a pound."

"Nor do I !" cried Todd—"nor do I now, Tommy. But, come, don't let's say any more about it now."

"They then went up to the ladies : and, in less than an hour, Georgiana and Julia knew all. Maitland himself told them all ; and while he was doing so, Todd drew Tom aside, and said, "Tommy, I want that five thousand : shell out."

"What, the lot?"

"Yes, the lot."

"I haven't got the lot by me!"

"You told me you had!"

"No ; I said it was safe."

"Well, where is it?"

"Look here. You know Mildmay went up to town yesterday morning?"

"Yes : well?"

"Well, just before he went, he happened to let out to me that he wanted to purchase a paper. 'Have you tin enough?' says I. 'I can manage,' says he, 'I think.' 'What do you mean?' says I. But the bottom of it is, as I had the five one thousand pound notes by me, I lent him three, and sent him up to secure this paper, which he's sure of making a capital property of."

"All right, Tommy ; I'm glad to hear that. *He's* a man, he is :

what I call a man. If *you* couldn't have let him had the money, I would. I'd trust him with my life. Well! You let him have three of 'em: where's the other two? Now, I want 'em; come, fork out at once."

"Well, you can have 'em, you know, if you like?"

"Then shell 'em out at once."

"Well, but look here: I've told you over and over again I should like to have a nice little farm."

"Very well. We'll talk about that another time: all I want now is these mopuses."

"Well!" cried Tom, "then you shall have 'em. They ain't a mite o' use to me as they are."

"Of course not," said Todd. "Are they up-stairs?"

"Yes."

"Then go and bring 'em down, Tommy; go and bring 'em down."

Tom did so, and placing them at once in Todd's hands, said, "They're rum 'uns to look at!"

"They are," replied Todd, "but they're uncommon good 'uns. Now look here," he added, "I haven't quite made up my mind about it yet, but it strikes me—I say that it *strikes* me—that this five thousand had better go back to the general."

"What!" cried Tom; "and ducks! What! when he would have plundered us? What d'you mean?"

"Well, I haven't yet made up my mind."

"No, I should say not; and never will to that, I should think."

"I don't know. We shall see."

"We must see a long way, you know, send I may live, before we can see any justice in that."

"Well, but I only say—"

"I know you only *say*; but I'd rather poke the blessed notes into the fire."

"Well, but don't be too fast, Tommy; hold hard a bit. We must think of it."

"Yes; we'll *think* as long as you like: but don't let us get any further than that. I say," he added, "ladies; wouldn't you like to go for a ride? Look here: it's an out-and-out beautiful day?"

The ladies consulted and then consented, and when they were ready to start, Georgiana mounted Adonis, Julia Tartar, and Maitland Mab. As Tom and Mary entered the curricie, and having taken leave of Todd, who had made up his mind to return to Newmarket, they went towards the Mildenhall Rows.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

## THE CONCLUSION.

THE only important circumstance that occurred for some time after Maitland and Julia had left the Box was a most important circumstance indeed!—Georgiana gave birth to a beautiful child—a girl!—who not only won for Todd a hundred pounds, but absolutely inspired him with rapture! Oh! what joy he experienced then. He appeared to have recommenced life! In every feature he discovered the semblance of his *own* child, and frequently felt, as he gazed upon her, that she had come down from heaven to live with him again.

“Tommy,” he would say, as the tears gushed from his eyes, “she couldn’t keep from me: she loved me too well. *Here* she is again! here she is!—and God be praised for sending her to me!”

Tom didn’t exactly enter into the spirit of this: still he thought that if there ever were an angel upon earth, that child of his was one.

And so did Georgiana think: and so did Georgiana’s aunt—who visited *her* during her confinement, and who, before she left, made a fresh will, and settled the whole of her property upon the infant;—and so did Mrs. Brooke; but the general, when he heard of it, called it a *cub*!

It is true that Tom himself called the infant a *kid*, but he thought it a little angel nevertheless: whereas the general, when he called it a *cub*, had just as much contempt for it as he could have had if it really had been a little devil.

“Now, Tommy,” said Todd, on one occasion, “it strikes me forcible, Tommy, that George ’ll have a whole mob of little ’uns. Now just you look here: you’ve often spoke to me about a farm, and I’ve as often said, ‘Stop till the times is better: stop till the wheats is higher: stop till we see what they’re goin’ to be after with the corn laws’—in short, stop for this, that, and t’other. Very well! Now I think the time’s come when you need stop fof nothin’! The first child may be well provided for; the second may be well provided for, and so may the third and the fourth; but if George should have a whole multitude of ’em, you should look out in time, so that when they grow up, you may start ’em in life, you know, tidy!”

“That’s about it!” cried Tom. “That’s just what I want.”

“Very well, then, I’ve got a nice farm in my eye—above five hundred acres—quite large enough for you; and we’ll go and see about it to-morrow.”

This farm was eventually purchased, and Tom was indefatigable in his efforts to improve it. He spared no expense : he was up with the lark ; and the result was, that in a very few years it was one of the most valuable farms in the county.

In the mean time, Mildmay was prosperous. The paper—of which he had purchased the copyright—paid well, and enabled him not only to live in good style, but to save money fast, while Mary—who became extremely timid in society—was so fond of her husband and children, that, unless they went with her, she seldom left home.

Julia had no children. Maitland was kind to her—very kind—but he was a most unhappy man ! His reflections were daggers : conscience tyrannised over him : acts of restitution impoverished him ; while the claims of his former associates drove him almost mad.

He would occasionally go down to the farm with Julia—to whom Georgiana was still strongly attached—and whenever he went he was kindly received ; but even kindness then—although he could not fail to appreciate it—seemed to embitter his feelings, while the presence of an honest man abashed him.

He sent letters of apology to Colonel Storr, but the colonel never forgave him : nor would he ever see him : he and Mrs. Storr saw Julia frequently, and freely forgave *her* ; but *him* they repudiated utterly !

Todd, long before the farm had been purchased—notwithstanding Tom's warm opposition—sent back to the general the five thousand pounds which Tom had received as his share of the bet ; but instead of this softening the general, the only immediate effect it had was that of inducing him to return it, accompanied by a most contemptuous note.

He did, however, while on his death-bed express a wish to see Georgiana alone ; and on her arrival, while kissing her with his dying breath, he gave her his will, by which he bequeathed the whole of his property to her boy.

This threw Tom into a perfect state of rapture, for the boy—whose name was George—was his favourite child. "Send I may live !" he cried, running to Todd immediately after he heard of it. "I say, governor, *look* here : *here's* a start ! What do you think ?"

"Can't think, Tommy," replied Todd, calmly.

"Why, the general's gone and left every blessed stick to George !"

"Is he dead, Tommy ? Dead !"

"He died about half-past ten."

"Then I hope he's happy."

"So do I. But what do you think of his leaving every individual thing in the world to the kid ?"

"But you *don't* mean that ?"

"I do though, as true as I'm alive !"

"Then he has made some atonement."

"Atonement! I believe you. And what's more, he kissed George and forgave her?"

"I am more glad a good deal to hear that than the other: 'cause now she'll be happy indeed. But you rayther confuse me. Which George do you mean? I suppose you mean he's left all to *her*?"

"No, the *kid*, I tell you!—the *boy* George! And now we shall be able to make a distinction. Look here. I shouldn't have had him christened George at all; but I somehow or another liked the name. Very well. Now, *I've* often been confused, you know, as we call Georgiana George too; so I'll tell you how we'll cook it. Look here: as the general wasn't a bad sort at bottom, perhaps—although his conduct wasn't exactly the thing—but as, perhaps, he repented, and as he's left all to the boy, I'll tell you what we'll do: we'll call the kid General George! Eh? What do you say to that?"

"Yes, that'll do, Tommy, that'll do. But do you mean to say he's left *every* thing to him?"

"Yes, every blessed thing upon earth."

"But that wasn't behaving, you know, Tommy, *exactly* the thing to his wife."

"Oh! she's got plenty of her *own*, you know."

"That makes no odds, Tommy, as *I* look at it. He might have done that: if ever so little, he might have left her *suffen*."

"So he *might*."

"It's what I call treatin' a wife with disrespect, and that, you know, I never like to see."

"Well, but suppose, you know, she *wished* him to leave all, as he did?"

"If she did, that's a horse of another colour! But were they friendly before he died?"

"Yes: as friendly as birds. They made it all up three or four days ago. And it strikes me she did wish him to leave all to the boy, in order, you know, to prove to *us* that he died without malice."

"Very good, Tommy, that's a good thought. Very likely. I dare say it was so: still no flesh can beat me out of this: that he might have left her *suffen*. Now look here, Tommy: just see how it looks: it looks for all the world as if he died malicious, whether he did or not. I say it looks so, and will look so to mortal flesh in general. They'll say, 'There you are, you see. Just what we thought. He's died, and never left her a pound. And what for? Why, because they never lived any matters together, or because, perhaps, she treated him ill.' I therefore say again, Tommy—and I'll stick to it the longest day I have to live—that in order to prevent this—in order to stop people's mouths up, which *will* talk—he ought, by all manner of means, to've left her *suffen*."



"Well, perhaps he gave her something before he died. But we shall know more about that by-and-by. What I look at more particular is, you know, the idea of his making the kid his heir. Why, General George 'll be a nob of the first water! and since he *is* to be General George, I'll tell you what he shall do: he shall *look* like a general; I'll have a general's uniform made for him regular."

"What, now?"

"Yes, now. Although he *is* but a four-year old, that makes no odds. I'll have it made in every individual way *like* a general's!"

And it was made. And General George grew and became a splendid fellow, and when of age took the name of Brooke with the estate.

THE END.

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